

MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, August 1st, 2017, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:32 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Michael Davis (Co-Vice-Chair); Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, David Hacin, and William Rawn. Absent were: Andrea Leers, David Manfredi, Paul McDonough (Co-Vice-Chair), Daniel St. Clair, and Kirk Sykes. Also present was David Carlson, Executive Director of the Commission. Representatives of the BSA were present. Michael Cannizzo was 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, July 22, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the July 11th, 2017 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the July 11th, 2017 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. MD noted that the Commission had a bare quorum. Business would be conducted and votes taken; certain votes would have to be ratified by Commissioners not present tonight at the next monthly meeting.

Bill Rawn (WR) was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **36-70 Sprague Street Project**. David Carlson (DAC) noted that the Proposed Project was in Readville, in a mixed industrial/residential area by train tracks, and near the Yard 5 Project reviewed by the Commission. The proposed 500+ unit residential project was over half a million SF; review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the 36-70 Sprague Street Project in the Readville neighborhood.

WR returned. The next item was a report from Review Committee on the **45 Townsend Project**. DAC noted that this was the site of the Radius Hospital and was now proposed as a residential development of over 320 units. The existing buildings would be demolished. Density was less than permissible under zoning. At 380,000 SF, the proposal was well over the BCDC threshold of 100,000 SF, and review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 45 Townsend Street Project on the former Radius Hospital site in the Roxbury neighborhood.

The next item was a report from Review Committee on the **Neponset Wharf Project**. DAC

noted that this was a significant redevelopment for the Port Norfolk neighborhood and included about 150 units, as well as a small (25-room) hotel, marina support, and modest restaurant uses. At over 300,000 SF, the Project was over the BCDC threshold; review was recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Neponset Wharf Project at 24 Ericsson Street in the Port Norfolk neighborhood.

The next item was a report from Review Committee on the **40 Rugg Road Project** in Allston. DAC noted that this was another housing project, here about 260 units, and also nearly 300,000 SF. The location was within the Brighton Guest Street planning area. Review was recommended; it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 40 Rugg Road project on the parcels bounded by Braintree Street, Penniman, Rugg, and Emery roads, and properties to the south fronting Hano Road, in the Allston/Brighton neighborhood.

WR was recused from the next item. The next item was a report from Design Committee on the **88 Seaport Project (Seaport Square Parcel D)**. Shohei Shigematsu (SS) of OMA presented the evolved design, showing a combination of views while discussing the themes of the Project and the intention of the break in the building itself. Yanni Tsipis (YT) of WS Development presented a series of floor plans with a scaled 5,000 SF area to discuss potential locations in the building for the required cultural/nonprofit use. He noted that it could be on the first or second floors, or split between the two. He also showed floor plans above where the building is 'carved,' as was requested. SS showed a ground floor/site plan, then presented a series of lower facade views in black and white and noted the details of the building cladding (zinc and glass) as it transitions to the street. He noted the signage. SS: We are beginning to think about the integration of signage with the design and details of the building. YT: That will be worked out with the BPDA. SS showed a rendered twilight view taken from the northeast.

Deneen Crosby (DC) asked whether they were working with someone on the cultural/civic space. YT: That entity is not chosen yet. The spaces required to date have been 'leftovers.' There's a chance here to work with the entity if it's defined early enough, but it's not good to pre-set the space. Linda Eastley (LE) asked about the relationship of the floors/terraces and the cut, which SS and YT reprised. DC: I feel that the corner is an important element in the public realm here, and a good spot for the cultural use. David Hacin (DH): This is an extraordinary design. I encourage the BPDA to push for a space for civic use that *does* connect. It feels a little like a cheat to have the [second floor terrace] space seen but not accessible. Storefront guidelines will be important. MD: I'd make three amendments. It's important that the signage be embedded, that the design itself and its spaces be retained, and that the civic space should be preferenced to front the park. DH: I'd like to disconnect the public terrace notion from the civic space notion. It could be another use, even connected to retail. Was something possible at the roof? YT: That may be a space for a tenant, but it was discussed. MD: You're committed to the 5,000 SF space, though. Steve Hollinger: This is a 3.5 billion dollar Master Plan, with 750 million in profit so far. In the 12 acres completed, I challenge anyone to name any public spaces - aside from the church, and a minor 1200 SF space. There was 200,000 SF of cultural uses removed in the proposed NPC; the BPDA is putting that back on the table. We should not

wait for space. With that, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the 88 Seaport (Seaport Square Parcel D) Project in the Seaport Square PDA area in the South Boston Waterfront District, with the conditions that the signage be embedded in the design, that the essential design and its spaces be retained, and that the ‘civic’ space should be preferenced to front the park.

WR remained recused. The next item was a presentation of the **36-70 Sprague Street Project**. Jordan Warshaw (JW) of the Noannet Group introduced Joel Bargmann (JB) of Bargmann Hendries + Archetype. JB showed the site locus and context photos. JW: Our company has done luxury downtown buildings. Here, this is a ‘discovered’ site - large, next to transportation. My daughter goes to the gym across the street. JW noted Sprague Pond, the tiered levels of their Project, with a level area adjacent to Sprague, and area apartment complex comparisons. JB then showed the site plan, a diagram showing stories, how the parking is accessed, the grading against Sprague Street, the access to the adjacent Brinks site under their deck. JB: The deck is higher than the Brinks building, so it looks over it. JW: Everything on the site - it has more amenities than usual - is here to make the site’s existence known. LE: This is a real candidate for a model.

JW: Kyle Zick was able to design a park by the pond, prompted by a neighborhood comment. JB: The idea is a courtyard as a town square with the amenity spaces enlivening it. The site is a bit of an island. (Shows site connections for cars, and for people. Shows a series of views from the interior, up to upper Sprague, then amenity spaces.) We are shifting the industrial expression we felt appropriate to the site. (Shows a view into the site, then an elevation.) Using the same industrial grid window system, but evolving the design into something that breaks that up. (Shows sections. Shows a plan, then a birds-eye view, notes the development of the park, shows a vignette of the park. Shows a series of before-and-after views using context photos.) Both JW and JB described the viewpoints in the latter, including historic Miags Field.

DC: So as far as true public spaces, it’s the park and the restaurant. JW: Yes. DC: So, from the parking, and the park, you see the edge of the garage structure. Do whatever you can do to invite people to that space. Also, Sprague could become a real street...make more connections. Development could occur across the street. DH: An interesting site. This is a good attempt to add residential into an area that’s at a remove. The discussion should be about connections. As much as the views were discussed as proving it was NOT visible, I would actually like it to be visible, and more attractive - that’s how it sets up a future for Sprague Street. MD: Agreed. What is your location vis-a-vis IB2030? JW: Readville is mentioned there. MD: This is a kind of development corridor. It’s an important site, and important to understand what potential there might be. Also, the architecture of the higher buildings is good enough to ask why the lower building is so impoverished. It’s a question of level of investment; it doesn’t have to look *exactly* like a factory building.

JW: I did not want this to look like many of the 4-5 story buildings you see. I wanted something more industrial...that was not designed as the weak sibling. We can discuss that in Committee. DH: I appreciate that, and like the instinct. But you could be taking advantage of the subtle

shifts and breaks in the building, for example. MD: I wouldn't want this to be a lesser impression from this direction. DC: You can bring your earlier studies. LE: Option studies...it would help Sprague to have the building closer, especially if the other side of Sprague is done in the future. For me, the interior courtyard, with its green and 'Spanish steps,' is a good idea, but I am concerned about the relationship to Sprague. And the parking connection - visual cues to the restaurant, etc. It seems like a trail head now. Then, show us the experience of walking through the site, how pedestrian flows work, uninterrupted. Semis are going into the Brinks site. JW: The advice from the BPDA was to bring more green to Sprague. It helps Sprague to have that as well as the building. LE: And, how you're handling the entry sequence off of Sprague. DH: Maybe the restaurant could migrate closer.... With that, and hearing no public comment, the 36-70 Sprague Street Project was sent to Design Committee.

WR returned, and MD took action to make whole the votes as noted in the beginning, including ratification of the minutes. Two actions will require ratification next month. The next item was a presentation of the **45 Townsend Street Project**. Kurt Therrien (KT), president of Kensington, introduced the Project and Gail Sullivan (GS). GS then introduced Shauna Gillies-Smith of Ground. GS showed the location, noting it was a 15-minute walk to Jackson Square or Dudley stations. She showed the context in a series of keyed photos - area streets, Codman Park, Horatio Harris Park. Then an aerial photo, noting larger buildings in the area. She noted the history of the site, and showed an aerial of the existing condition. GS: The site touches three sub-neighborhoods. We have three key drivers: sustainable development, community resilience (including climate change and water conservation, and health and wellness), and the relationship of the buildings to the natural landscape. We are also reducing energy use by 45%. And minimizing ledge removal; there is a 40-foot grade change on the built site, and 18' more beyond that. The neighbors are most concerned about ledge removal, so we are building on flat areas. (Shows section diagrams, then an aerial with the site plan inserted. Another aerial showing views. Goes through plans, starting with level 1 along Townsend, noting a co-working space and a café.) SGS: The idea was to make the building permeable, and open to the street. (Shows the main entry lobby and its active spaces, the separate townhouse entries.) We are emulating the nearby existing stone walls on the site. DC asked about the location of the walls. SGS: They are back of sidewalk. GS: There is also a grade change. The houses next door are 1½ stories up, with their full basements exposed.

GS showed the second floor plan, noting the parking and the beginning of the amenity spine. SGS: The ledge here allows for a more natural landscape. GS goes up to the 4th floor: Here, there's a connection to the community - a path to Dennison Street, a Harrishof connection. There are open spaces - a dog park, an orchard to recall the area's history, a plaza component that's also a fire truck turnaround. The pedestrian-only path links are because the neighborhood did NOT want a vehicular connection. There's a secondary lobby at this level, because it's so remote, but also a stair up to the 5th floor, with an amenity space on top of the garage, including a swimming pool. SGS: There's also a smaller deck up on the 11th floor. DC: Are there more green spaces on the roofs? GS: They're all PV-covered, but with some green inbetween. We want energy generation. MD: How big an array? GS: 450-830 KW, as large as we can get.

GS then showed a full section, and before-and-after views from Townsend, noting the use of warm wood panels at the ground. LE: The upper floor treatment is different - is it public? GS: It's a different curtainwall up there. It's not public, that's more in the center. DH asked about the materials. GS: We propose a high-grade concrete, with brick on the front. (Notes the tilted window bays. Shows more before-and-after views. On one, SGS notes the stone wall. Shows

a view of the left side, noting the driveway and steep 20% grade. Notes the parking behind the residential uses facing Townsend. Shows an evening view of the townhouse entries. Shows a view from Harrishof.) We are using a screening strategy for the garage up here. The green roof is visible but not public; the terraces help to break down and buffer the wall, providing a kind of amphitheater seating. We are breaking up the facade here with undulations (shows view). SGS: The grade in this area has about a 5' variation. There's a dog park in the trees (view is shown next of the plaza area). GS: This area will serve the larger neighborhood beyond the immediate homes. (Shows views from Dennison Street, Codman Park, Washington Street.)

LE: I want to compliment you on your presentation; it was very easy to understand and follow. Could some of the history of the site, which is interesting, be expressed? I appreciate the townhouses, which have an intimate scale despite the scale of the building. You have done a clever job of using the open space around you. MD: And there is no zoning relief? GS: That's not fully determined yet. DH: This is a really thoughtful response to the site - there's a lot of nice things. The model is really outstanding, and helps us to understand. There's a little about the buildings to be understood, though - the renderings are different than the model. GS: The model is a little more monolithic. DH: On the outcropping, understanding the materiality is important. The upper floor opening up - I like that consistency. But I want to understand the detailing on the planar portions. DC: More understanding of the topography, and what that means in your park design, would help. I love the ledge, and how it repeats itself. WR: I agree with everyone on how thoughtful this is. I think this will be successful. But what happens if the costs start cutting back? What is Plan B? KT: It's preliminary now. GS: So the concern is fiber cement? DH: That's part of it. If you have info, we can look at that. MD: There's not that much to discuss in Committee; we can be expeditious. DH: We will want more info on the buildings. DC: And on the park topo. With that, and hearing no public comment, the 45 Townsend Street Project was sent to Design Committee.

The next item was a presentation of the **Neponset Wharf Project**. Kevin Deabler (KD) of RODE introduced their team, including Cody Klein (CK) of OJB, noting they were at the beginning of a process. He showed a site locus plan. KD: This is a waterfront parcel, behind Ericsson Street, but accessed through the residential neighborhood streets. The water area is of high environmental concern. And neighborhood concern...we are collecting comments now, for responses. (Shows site context photos.) We are at the edge of a historic industrial site. LE asked if they could enlarge the views; they do so. KD shows views down streets, views of boat sheds, noting it's all paved area. Then views of the historic buildings - the nail factory, and what is now the Distillery - and historic photos. KD: There have been efforts on this edge of Dorchester to provide trails and pedestrian access. Finnegan Park is the reclamation of a brownfield. Those trails connect to Mattapan Square. (Shows the Chapter 91 line, an axon of the neighborhood, a diagram of the residential and industrial areas, the older idea of an overlay area. Notes the limited access. Shows the disconnects in the area pedestrian pathways. Then shows a diagram of the site with massing volumes built up by use.)

CK presented the site plan, noting they are interested in Commission comments, and noting the piers and boat slips on the water. CK: We focus on maritime uses, with three subdistricts, stitching with existing conditions. A wharf area. A green space, toward the beach. We are in the early stages of programming...fishing, water connections, programmable space, kayaks, a playground, an urban beach. We're working on how the traffic is handled, making access connections. WR: Are we going to see buildings? What are we looking at? KD showed internal views, with some building edges, and then a view from their fish pier looking toward the

whole complex. He noted their small model, and showed the massing and materials strategy. Then a series of small sections, a group of elevations, and a note on the scale of the community.

DH: Maybe this should be conceived of as a two-stage process, focused first on the site plan, then maybe their coming back.... LE: As part of the site strategy, how do you enter from the neighborhood streets, then splay the grid? If we understand that more from an urban planning point of view, we can go into the buildings. DH: How do the uses work, if this is a residential enclave? KD: If you're from Dorchester, you know this area; if from Boston, maybe not. This is unusual for us, but we are getting the planning done first. We are rebuilding the marina, and water uses at the edge. DC: This is a really high-risk area. What are you doing about resiliency? KD: We are working with Tomasetti, and using the marina infrastructure as wave attenuation.

WR: I'm a little troubled here - we really don't have much of a plan. At some point, there's a lot of [diagram] repetition, but not a lot of information. I haven't seen a lot of presentations this thin. MD: What is the likelihood - with the state, with neighbors - that this will change? WR: Can we defer action? Personally, I don't feel there's enough to act on. LE: There are a lot of ingredients here, but not a story. What are the strategies? How can they be combined? CK: We do have a site plan, and have more worked out. Maybe we should have focused on that - we have those things. LE: So you have ingredients. But this would have benefitted from a logical flow. MD: Agreed. This is very large scale urban design. DH: It sounds like your program is being discussed. Without knowing exactly what that is, it's hard to say that there should be two buildings instead of three, etc. MD: We can have a UD-level discussion if you have that info. Also, I'm not sure about residential on top of three levels of garage. DH: It's a dilemma. This is a wonderful site. MD acknowledged the public.

John Lyons: I'm president of the Port Norfolk Civic Association. I would ask Ed Roche (ER) to outlay our concerns. We have been waiting since February; we still don't have enough information. (Introduces others: Mary McCarthy, Laura Melody, Susan Rogers, Ed Roche and his son.) Maria Lyons: We are smack in the middle of ACEC. We wanted to make sure that Finnegan Park was a park, not a private development. ER (hands out a 1980's report): This was the first IPOD in the City. There was a huge fire in 1980.... I want to give Kevin the benefit of the doubt; he did not have a copy of the 1989 BRA report. 45 people worked on the plan from the BRA, 35 in the neighborhood. It became zoning. Everyone is waiting for this development to happen, but the form, scale, and size will be debated. There are 130 homes in the neighborhood, but here 175 (*sic*) are proposed. (Points out the old views shown.) The existing buildings are at 4 stories. That made for a harmonious scale - it was beautiful. Utilitarian structures, but beautiful. The primary problem is that, in order to satisfy Chapter 91, the residential uses have to set back. With the marina, no one has problems. Over the past 30 years, DCR has grown to control 40% of the land in the peninsula as open space; the cars coming in are beginning to be a problem. The problem here is that the site plan is dictating the buildings. (Shows a diagram on his handout, showing the Project at 86' vs. the neighborhood [more like 35'].) Tenean Beach is a resource known as far out as Newton; we don't want to exacerbate the beaches. The road LOS is at level F at all the points of connection. There's already failure, and this adds an additional 1500 (*sic*) trips a day. The streets are narrow...if you can just imagine trying to sit on your porch to enjoy the area, and seeing traffic instead, going back to Neponset Circle. We're at saturation now. And DCR is planning to close two lanes on Morrissey Boulevard; that will make it worse.

DH: A traffic study...understanding the flow would be good to know. There's no question that this was a beautiful historic condition. I understand the pressure to create open space is a concern, when you have enough. Clearly what's the concern about the historic condition, is the scale. ER: Perhaps a design charrette in the neighborhood. MD: That's in the report. Seems like a good idea. KD: It's a participatory process. MD: You're known for that. KD: Exactly. We are working with this. It's a slow process...scale, parking, and use. DH: Seeing the history, then prior plans, then this, in linear fashion, would help. KD: We will take our time; we expect a 12-month process. LE: When you have the charrette, consider resiliency. That will place a lot of restrictions on floor uses. ER: I love the neighborhood. Thank you for your service. With that, the Neponset Wharf Project was sent to Committee.

The next item was a presentation of the **40 Rugg Road Project**. Jay Russo (JR) of Mansfield Properties introduced the team, and stated they would be very quick. Kenneth Hartfiel (KH) of DiMella Shaffer presented the design, first noting the locus, then the site, noting the buildings to be demolished, and easements. He showed the site in the area context. KH: The design is following the street, wrapping the garage; we are staying above the water table. The garage is mechanical, like a car dispenser. The space along Braintree alleviates the sense of a canyon with the building across the street. The ground floor uses have common areas and amenities facing Braintree. LE: Could more connections go through to Penniman? JR: We don't control those properties. Michael Cannizzo (MC): But there is a courtyard, so it is possible between 20 and 30 Penniman. KH showed elevations: There is a brick band at the base, and vertical organization above. The design has evolved since your info package. (Shows views of the street edge and treatment, the view inbetween the buildings, the space between the buildings at the ramp.) The space between the buildings is about 30' wide, with a path to get residents to use it. (Shows a view of their green space commons and building, seen from Penniman Park.) There are terraces off the green space commons. At Braintree, there's retail with a coffee shop at the corner.

DH: This is a nice Project. WR: We'll probably need a model, and more information/detail on the site plan. MD: There are a lot of good views, but I have some concern with the elevations. LE: There are some clever things with the open space. You have open space next to two service drives; how do they work? I'd like to know more about the nature of the space between the buildings. It looks tighter than you think...you need to buffer the sides, provide security, good lighting. And I'm intrigued by the triangular park. I'd like to know more about that. DH: More information. The basic strategy is nice, but I'd like to know more - details, what the elevation is like. LE: A shadow study would help us to be more inventive on our comments. With that, and hearing no public comments, the 40 Rugg Road Project was sent to Design Committee.

There being no further items for formal discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 8:35 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for September 5th, 2017. The recording of the August 1st, 2017 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.