

MINUTES
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, December 03, 2019, starting in Room #900, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:15 p.m. Members in attendance were Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, David Hacin, Andrea Leers, David Manfredi, Paul McDonough, and William Rawn. Absent were Eric Höweler, Mikyoung Kim, Anne-Marie Lubenau, and Kirk Sykes. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Representatives of the BSA attended. Jay Lee and Eva Jermyn were present for the Department of Neighborhood Development. Raul Duverge, Meghan Richards, and Natalie Punzak were present for the BPDA.

The Chair, Andrea Leers, 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. She announced that this meeting is being recorded in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. She 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, November 22, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the November 6, 2019 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on November 19 and 26, 2019. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the November 6, 19, and 26, 2019 BCDC Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the J.J. Carroll Redevelopment project in the Brighton neighborhood. The John J. Carroll Apartments were developed by the Boston Housing Authority in 1966 and currently consist of 64 public housing units and a small community room. To become code-compliant, the property would require significant rehabilitation. Instead, the existing structures will be demolished and replaced by a single structure of about 180,000 SF with ~144 affordable rentals for seniors. The ground floor along Chestnut Hill Avenue will have a lobby, multipurpose room, offices, and PACE center, which is an innovating healthcare model for seniors that will be accessible to eligible 2Life residents and area seniors. The project exceeds the BCDC review threshold of 100,000 SF and review is recommended. As such, it was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed J.J. Carroll Redevelopment project in the Brighton neighborhood.

The next Review Committee item was the 135 Dudley Street project in the Roxbury neighborhood. Cruz Development Corporation proposes a mixed-use residential/commercial development project of approximately 347,000 SF in a new building with two tower elements. The project proposes 160 housing units (mixed rental/condo), 15,500 SF of street level commercial space, including office space for the Boston Chapter of the NAACP, and a restaurant flexible space-tenant amenities/art space. The 2018 RFP issued by the City stipulated that the selected development team create a mixed-use commercial and residential development with a significant public open space which

would complement the existing civic uses (including a branch public library and courthouse). Review is recommended. Therefore, a motion was made, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 135 Dudley Street project in the Roxbury neighborhood.

The next Review Committee report was for the 780 American Legion Highway project in the Roslindale neighborhood. The Home for Little Wanderers (HFLW) proposes a mixed-use development project of approximately 187,000 SF in a five-story mixed-use (behavioral-clinical/supported housing) building for HFLW and a six-story multi-family structure. The two proposed buildings will contain 115 dwelling units -22 units of supported housing for youths who are aging out of the Commonwealth's foster care system, and 93 dwelling units of market-rate rental and townhouse condos. The project exceeds the area threshold and review is recommended. A motion was made, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 780 American Legion Highway project in the Roslindale neighborhood.

Next was the report on the Simmons University Institutional Master Plan and Living and Learning Center project in the Fenway neighborhood. The IMPNF proposes taking the current Residential Campus out of service. The facilities at that campus (athletics, a dining hall, and approximately 1,100 dormitory beds) will be moved to a new Living and Learning Center on the Academic Campus. The IMP also includes significant internal reconfiguration of the University's buildings. Given the scale and public nature of this project, review is recommended. Therefore, a motion was made, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Simmons University Institutional Master Plan and Living and Learning Center project in the Fenway neighborhood.

The last Review Committee report was for the 15 Necco Street project in the South Boston Waterfront neighborhood. In November, 2019 Alexandria Real Estate and National Development filed a Notice of Project Change for the project known as the General Electric Company Corporate Headquarters Project. The proposal includes design and program modifications to the part of the project known as the New Building and related site improvements. The primary change is use, changing from a single company headquarters to multi-tenant office/lab with retail/restaurant uses on the ground floor. The surrounding landscape will be modified to adapt to the new program and increased openness of the building. Given the significant changes to a previously reviewed and approved project, review is recommended. It was then moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 15 Necco Street project in the South Boston Waterfront neighborhood.

The Commission moved into Votes of Recommendation for projects from Design Committee. The first presentation was for **One Kenmore Square**. David Manfredi was recused.

Gary Hilderbrand, Reed Hilderbrand: The focus of the Commission's comments was materiality and public realm improvements. Project area includes an existing 8,200 SF parcel, will be adding a total of 32,000 SF of public realm improvements in Kenmore Square. Through the redesign of the intersection, the project will add protected bike lanes. The presentation includes rendered views, street sections, and precedent imagery of street furnishings for the project. The project requires windscreens and building canopy for wind mitigation that were developed with comments from the Commission.

Jeanne Gang, Studio Gang: Commission was concerned with visibility through the building and the ground floor corner use. The ground floor is open, as the wall of the bank was removed and the majority of functions were relocated to the second floor. Originally a central atrium, the building core was reconfigured which allows for an expanded rooftop bar and terrace.

Deneen Crosby: Changes to Kenmore Square view corridors have always concerned me and I've had a hard time supporting this project.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: There is no doubt that you have a stellar team of designers on this project. I commend you on taking on this challenge, but I have reservations about the building's scale in its context as well as what happens on the street level of a key corridor.

Jeff Speck: Any project of this scale requires a significant trade off. For me, the only loss I perceive is a change in history. A place that is perceived as difficult to walk in and nearly impossible to bike in with no public space is getting a civic space and safe pedestrian and bike connections. This project serves to enhance a gateway in the city with a monumental building.

Andrea Leers: What I do very much appreciate here is the rethinking of movement, place, and creation of pedestrian realm in Kenmore Square where it hasn't been for a very long time. Its both safer and a civic place. I think the building will be beautiful and a special addition to the city. Its main shortcoming is its proximity to the other buildings on Commonwealth Avenue. Instead of a flat iron building that continues the street wall, it's a monumental scale in the shape of a flatiron. But to me, this is a project that is worth it.

Public comment, resident: At the moment, there are no hotels in Boston that allow views of tens of thousands of people to Fenway Park. I am concerned about the safety implications of this project on Fenway Park.

A motion was made to approve the project with continued work on a narrowed right of way. The motion was seconded but not approved. A new motion was made, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval for the One Kenmore Square project, with proviso that the three wide lanes between the building and adjacent structures on Commonwealth Avenue be narrowed to the extent possible; that there be a maximum of three narrow lanes with a preference for two, with the goal of shortening the distance between building faces; and the building better align while minimizing the width of lanes to be more consistent with nearby cross streets.

Allston Yards PDA and Building A was presented next. David Manfredi was recused.

Chris Galvao, Elkus Manfredi: Most of the comments from the Commission focused on the nature of the Guest Street extension and the creative diversity of design in the project. Rendered views of the overall project were presented to show the character of architecture in the masterplan and the design scheme of Guest Street.

Eric Weyant, Stantec: Regarding Building A, we looked at ways to break the length of the façade with material change and canopies. Cantilevered portion of the residential form has an angular shape in plan and elevation. Material palette has been simplified into three materials that correspond to the volumetric form on the building.

Linda Eastley: The park will be the jewel of this project. Building A works well as a face to the park.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I want to commend your responsiveness to the suggestions made at Design Committee from a variety of concerns that range from building scale to street level details.

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

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval for the proposed Allston Yards PDA Master plan and Building A in the Brighton neighborhood.

The next project presentation from Design Committee was **282-306 Bremen Street** in East Boston.

Ruthie Kuhlman, RODE Architects: This project has two sides, a sculptural side that abuts the park and a back face to the neighborhood. Since we last presented the project to the full Commission, the building dropped one floor in response to community concerns. The front edge of the building was recessed to make room for a larger public realm and mobility hub. Material and opening sizes change based on the formal nature of the façade; larger window openings anchor building corner and retail nodes and warmer façade patterning ties the angled façade elements together.

William Rawn: This is the kind of the mid-scale project that we should be encouraging all over the city. It's well-crafted architecturally with a variety that is economical and superior to typical residential projects we see in the city.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I commend you on creating something modern and new that is still responsive to the existing neighborhood. You can see the ways the module of triple-deckers in the neighborhood have translated into this design.

Deneen Crosby: As you continue to refine the design of the streetscape, give yourself more flexibility with how you plant the street edge to ensure there is sufficient sidewalk space.

Andrea Leers: I'm impressed with how you took a long building that fits into the context without directly imitating. This is a nice project.

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

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval for the proposed 282-308 Bremen Street project in the East Boston neighborhood.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I would like to add that this project should be used as a model for residential projects of this scale that come before the Commission.

The next project presentation was **Seaport Square Parcel N**. William Rawn was recused.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: This project has been to two subcommittee meetings. At the most recent, we were challenged by understanding the changes made in response to the Commission. Broader concerns focused on the coloring and relationship to the public space ("The Cut") in the project. Yanni Tsipis, WS Development: Desire for tonal diversity in building color, greater accentuation in the ground floor texture and depth, and detailing of the streetscape and landscaping itself. Tom Lewis, Morris Adjmi Architects: Proposing a lighter color scheme for diversity in architectural expression, adjusted the ground floor, and provided additional detail to landscape.

Deneen Crosby: The Cut space looks a bit cavernous to me. As you develop the design, don't overplant the staircase. Study the solar orientation because we don't want this space to be dark.

David Hacin: I think the lightened material palette is preferable. I still have some concerns about the character along The Cut, which should be friendlier.

Linda Eastley: Think about ways to detail the public realm so that it actually becomes inviting.

Andrea Leers: The idea of lightening the metal infill is good, and I would encourage you to go farther. This came as a good project, it has evolved subtly, I would encourage you to listen to our comments and integrate them into the project. Many of the details are identical from the initial presentation to today, so keep working.

Hearing no public comment, a motion was made. The motion was moved, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the proposed Seaport Square Parcel N project in the South Boston Waterfront neighborhood.

The last presentation from Design Committee was **Washington Village NPC at 235 Old Colony Road** in the South Boston neighborhood. David Hacin and David Manfredi were recused.

David Chilinski, PCA Architects: At the moment, the NPC that was brought to the Commission concerns the southern quadrant of buildings. We will need to rethink portions beyond the site in the future to bring some of the new logic and visual axis to the future portions of the site.

Doug Jones, LeBlanc Jones: At Design Committee, we discussed the treatment of the interim condition of the site. The 112 parking spaces planned during the interim will be contained in enclosed parking in the future. In the interim, the lot will be greened.

David Chilinski: The building articulation evolved in response to comments about the complexity of façade design, unified window types.

William Rawn: The elevations have been revised since their presentation at the Design Committee. The idea of an industrial reference is interesting, but I wonder about the darker versus lighter color tones.

Andrea Leers: I think the adjustments in window types might not be enough to unify the scale and variation of the façade. Look at color choice.

Deneen Crosby: I was most concerned about the interim condition of this development, particularly as it relates to the back edge of the park. I feel these concerns have been addressed with the changes.

Linda Eastley: I like that the park now meets the street edge. I like that phase two seems to respond to the new focal points of the design.

Hearing no public comment, a motion was moved, seconded, and it was

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of proposed Washington Village NPC project in South Boston with the proviso that the team work with the BPDA to simplify the color and material palette of the façade design.

The Commission moved to project presentations, the first being for **J.J. Carroll Redevelopment** in the Brighton neighborhood. Meghan Richard, Urban Designer with the BPDA, offered a brief introduction to the project from the perspective of BPDA Staff. Design conversations have centered on how the project addresses the street and how to make the open space meaningful and useful. Lizbeth Heyer, 2Life Communities: We have three goals to meet with this project, the first being to connect this development with 2 Life's campus. All of the 2 Life campus buildings are connected through the interior to allow the low-income senior residents of this project to remain in place. The average age of residents who leave for more intensive care is 88, while with similar communities for older adults is 79. We also will add more affordable housing for seniors; the project proposes a total 144 units. The third is to increase the access and social health within this development. The existing units are not accessible, as half are on a second story with stairs, and there are no communal gathering spaces.

Patricia Gruits, MASS Design: Our goal with this project is to think about a model of housing that empowers residents to live in community that is reflected in the architecture itself. We were able to engage the residents that will actually be living here. Because 2Life is already on this site, its important for this project to maintain and improve the relationship with neighboring buildings and residents. There will be a dedicated open space off Chestnut Hill Ave. Pushing as much of the height and massing of the project toward the existing 2Life buildings that are already at a similar scale. Breaking up the massing but keeping them connected with a spatial volume we are calling the community main street. Exploring passive house strategies. Challenged by the topography of the site, so we are using an outdoor open space with sloped ramps, stairs, and seat walls to connect the ground floor retail on Wineberg to the retail space in our development.

Linda Eastley: I first want to thank you for your important mission. When you come to Design Committee, building sections will be helpful to understand the grading through the site.

David Hacin: I'm curious to know about the relationship between the building's front door and the residential back yards that abut the site. Why isn't the entrance off Chestnut Hill Ave? You can talk about this at Design Committee. I think the massing strategy is interesting; you've created a lot of perimeter, which comes with a cost. I'm wondering what the roofscape will look like with screening of mechanical equipment.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I want to commend the community-driven design process and the attention paid to neighborhood context. I want to better understand the way the neighborhood context informed the material choice.

David Manfredi: I would love to see views from the neighborhood with the existing homes in the foreground.

Andrea Leers: The one thing that trips me up about the project is the entry. How does shelter, arrival, pedestrian safety work together? The massing is thoughtful and well integrated with the existing context.

The project will continue in design committee.

The next project presentation was for **135 Dudley Street** in the Roxbury neighborhood.

Meghan Richard, BPDA: This project is one of four RFPs that was issued by the Department of Neighborhood Development. Conversations between the BPDA and proponent have centered on the form of the overall massing, (see

Daniel Cruz, Jr., Cruz Development Corporation: For those of you familiar with Dudley Station, we are trying to bring more density and life to this part of Boston. This project is 2/3 affordable, which is important to maintaining the social character and existing residents of the neighborhood. The NAACP will have a free space for 10 years and a scholarship for 10 years. We will be working with Youth Build Boston with a monetary gift for their programs and sponsorship of a graduate in this project.

Donavan, The Architectural Team: Trying to keep the massing to two volumes and a passage through. Building alignments were drawn from the neighborhood. The building will have projecting bays in residences and a formally stepped massing on the top few floors. Parking is masked by wrap-around residences. There is parking that fronts the park space.

Andrea Leers: This is an important development for this part of the city. I think your goals are right. That said, the massing is awkward. It looks too massive for this part of the city. There are other configurations that would achieve the same number of units but feel less bulky. You need to take a big step back and rethink the form. The lower part of the building works well for the street and neighborhood, but the upper portion does not.

David Hacin: A model with neighborhood context would be really helpful for us. I can only imagine that the demand for parking is driving the design of this project. Can the 120 parking spaces for the community be reduced to create a more elegant massing strategy for the site? I appreciate the homeownership, rental, and retail goals of this project. But I think the continuous retail wrapper on the building is detracting from the pedestrian experience. The green wall is not sufficient for the building condition along the park.

Deneen Crosby: The park is walled on two sides. To me there is an opportunity to make this a better civic space that connects through to the courtyard.

Andrea Leers: A priority of the Commission is no visible above ground parking.

Linda Eastley: This project has promise to create a grand civic square. Think about how to include the entry sequence to the courthouse, an active edge to your building, and function as a pedestrian passage to a future around the site.

William Rawn: It will be important to understand how the parking works in this scheme in terms of how it impacts the structural horizontal or diagonal lines on the building.

Community comment: We are excited by the proposal to reserve the local AMI. Parking is a major issue in this neighborhood. The planned height for this neighborhood is far beyond the existing context. Clarity around future plans at a large scale would better facilitate these projects and discussions.

The project will continue in design committee.

The **780 American Legion Highway** in Roslindale was the next presentation.

DHK Architects: This project is in the Greenbelt Protection Area. Landscaping front of building to define entrance to clinical building and residential building. Perimeter of parking is wrapped with townhouses to conceal it. Height datum from neighborhood is carried through to town houses on site. We are here to review the proposed Home for Little Wanderers commercial/clinical building and will return for review of the residential building on the site.

David Hacin: Another wonderful organization that is trying to meet important goals for Boston. This is similar to another project this evening in its large scale in contrast with the neighborhood. A model would help us understand the scale of this project and in the neighborhood fabric. As much as you are artfully trying to add two floors on the residential building as viewed from American Legion Highway, I feel that the height could be better distributed across the site.

Andrea Leer: I appreciate the sound decisions of the site planning. The massing is well distributed. A couple long site sections in addition to a site/topography model will help us better understand the site.

David Manfredi: The project proposes an interesting typology: larger academic spaces at the base with residential above. I really want to understand how residential sits on top and how the two scales of program and mass can be better integrated.

William Rawn: This project feels very programmatically complex, with so many different uses in one building. Are they organized in the most efficient way?

Anne-Marie Lubenau: We received a letter that raised issues about sustainability, public participation, and scale. A model will be important to understanding how this campus scale fits into the surrounding urban context.

Public comment, Mt Canturbury Neighborhood Association: I want to compliment the team on a thoughtful and attractive design. I am sympathetic to the delays the project has seen. But this project is too big for the neighborhood and we have been saying this from the project's origins. We would like to see housing here and we support the project mission, but this is a mile from the nearest transit hub and there is insufficient open space in the neighborhood. We'd like to see a smaller project.

The project will continue in committee.

The next project presentation was for **Simmons University Institutional Master Plan and Living and Learning Center** in the Fenway neighborhood. David Manfredi and William Rawn were recused.

Laura Pisinski, VP of University Real Estate Development at Simmons University: This is an important and final step in the strategic plan for Simmons, the only women's undergraduate college in Boston. We will be consolidating our two-site campus to the academic campus on Avenue Louis Pasteur and leasing the current residential campus on Brookline Avenue.

Emily Paparella, Elkus Manfredi Architects: IMP includes a renovation of existing library and Lefavor Hall which will be the future science center on campus. The existing science center will become the Living and Learning Center, which includes dining, library, and residences. Retaining existing streetwall. Primary entry is off the quad and serves to tie in the athletic center, the residential entry to the building, and access to the dining hall. Building towers are recessed from podium edge.

Simmons has a variety of architectural style and material. Looking to evoke the heritage of the historic architecture on campus through masonry openings and a transparent podium.

Chris Jones, IBI Landscape: University does not want to impact the existing quadrangle, but instead preserve the form and feel of the campus green space. The new building tries not to impose on the quadrangle as much as possible. We are working to improve campus circulation through and around the buildings.

Andrea Leers: This is an amazing consolidation and decision by Simmons University. The massing is smart. I think the dining podium intrudes too much on the quad. I think this could be easily revised to maintain the figure of the campus yard.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: Think about the space in three dimensions, particularly how they shape the ground plane.

Linda Eastley: I like the sculptural quality of the Living and Learning Center. I think the uses are legible in the form. I would like to learn more about the experience of getting into the quad. The new building has a very tight relationship with the library and School of Management. Can the building be softened and openings be amplified?

David Hacin: I think we need a wonderful hero image of the quad like we have of the new Living and Learning Center.

Andrea Leers: I wonder if it's the right approach to bring masonry up the towers. You might want to look at other materials that have color, scale, and texture that fit with the campus but aren't so heavy.

The project will continue in design committee.

The last project presentation was for **15 Necco Street** in the South Boston Waterfront neighborhood. David Manfredi and David Hacin were recused.

Chris Galvao, Elkus Manfredi: This project is a Notice of Project Change from the former GE Headquarters, which was planned for 3 buildings including the new office tower. Now, GE will occupy the two existing brick buildings on the site and 15 Necco Street will be a multi-tenant office building. The biggest change is that there is no canopy over the public plaza. We are looking to enhance the public nature of the ground floor with additional commercial uses and green space. The building volume has been adjusted to be volume that is pushed and pulled, stepping toward the water in height, which will allow for terraces for the tenants. Penthouse wrapped in solar panels. Massing decomposes with terraces that link green with park below.

Linda Eastley: We need to better understand the loading dock on Necco Street in Design Committee.

Andrea Leers: On the whole, I appreciate the simplification of the building compared to the prior one. The fact that it stands alone and doesn't try to privatize the space between the existing warehouse building is good. The offsets seem to have some meaning. It feels like Necco Street is the back of the building, but I think it needs its own entry presence.

Deneen Crosby: The ramp through the open space makes Necco Street feel more like a back than a front. Perhaps it can extend further into the site to smooth this experience.

Public comment: Curtain wall fatigue in the neighborhood. Looking at this, I think there are nice attempts to segment the building. Cantilever is nice. Integration of curtain wall with historic brick

buildings is a challenge. Given its profile and high visibility, we'd like this to match the color palette of the existing neighborhood architecture

The project will continue in design committee.

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 9:55 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for January 14, 2020. The recording of the December 3, 2019 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.