

DRAFT MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, November 5th, 2013, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9th Floor, Boston City Hall, beginning at 5:26 p.m.

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

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, October 19, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the October 15th, 2013 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

VOTED: To approve the October 15th, 2013 Boston Civic Design Commission Meeting Minutes.

Votes were passed for signature. MD asked for a report from the Review Committee. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Northampton Square Project and PDA**. David Carlson (DAC) reported that the Northampton Square Project as a PDA also incorporated some areas of rehabilitation only, one of which the Commission voted not to review last year. However, the primary project under the new PDA application was a new tower at the corner of Northampton and Albany streets. This was about 275,000 SF, well exceeding the BCDC threshold. Due to the PDA application and the scale of tower, a vote to review (with a focus on the new element) was recommended. It was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Northampton Square tower and PDA at the corner of Albany and Northampton streets in the Lower Roxbury neighborhood.

David Manfredi (DM), Paul McDonough (PM), and Bill Rawn (WR) were recused from the next item. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Ruth Mulan Chu Chao Center at the Harvard Business School**. DAC noted that a quorum was not present, so the vote would have to be taken and then ratified next month. So long as the Proponent agreed to continue to present and go to Design Committee, there should be no procedural problem, so long

as a quorum exists next month. DAC then reported that the Project was, at about 75,000 SF, less than the BCDC threshold. Nevertheless, it was the first major new building in the new Harvard IMP, and review was a condition of the Commission's recommendation of approval of that. A (confirmatory) vote to review was thus recommended; it was duly moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for Harvard's Chao Center Project in the context of the new Harvard Allston Campus IMP, in the Allston neighborhood.

PM was recused for the next item and left. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the **Lovejoy Wharf NPC**. MD noted that he was at the Design Committee meeting; the conversation focused on the site plan, and aspects of the neighboring building (Converse, under construction). Peter Spellios (PS) of The Related Companies: As a part of *this* Project, there is a limited amount we can do on that adjacent building, but we are working on that. It was a good point. (The team finished setting up a model on the table.) PS then described the site constraints and the current status of their design and roadway usage investigations. PS: Also, we had discussed turnarounds.... Our neighbors have also hired Copley Wolff and we are hoping to work out a plan with them (notes site plan). MD: And your architects are CWDG and ADD Inc? PS: And Robert A.M. Stern. Dan Lobitz (DL) of RAMS then began presenting the design modifications, first noting the locus. Andrea Leers (AL)(who gets a gold star for coming to the meeting after eye surgery) requested a quick overview. MD: The Project is being seen as an NPC; the BCDC had originally approved it some time ago. This is a change in use and design. DAC: The main use for this portion remains the same, but the amount of it changes.

DL continued his presentation, showing first plans, then the elevations, before and after. He noted the model showed what had been presented on October 22nd. He showed views, various perspectives, and aerial view, and more. WR: Is the building taller than before, with regard to the views from the building behind? DL: The massing is the same; the general approach is the same. (Shows lower vignette views, then focuses on the drop-off point.) MD: Did you make any changes to the Project since we saw it in Design Committee? DL: There are changes to the site. Linda Eastley (LE): Brick bands. DL: And larger trees, etc. MD: Also there was the notion of inviting one down to the water. PS: We will work out the details with the BRA, the State Police, and others. The land is effectively owned by MassDOT. Deneen Crosby (DC): I worry that effectively, you won't be able to accomplish much. This is an important pedestrian connection through to the pedestrian path across the dam. PS: We understand, and we think that they understand as well. They are working out their requirements.

MD: John Copley (JC), do you have any words of encouragement? JC promptly showed a new notion of having a defining curb at first, then going curbless beyond. LE: You have addressed our issues. The sidewalk at the Zakim should be sufficient, and there is an emphasis on the pedestrian realm beyond that. I note that the brick - I'm not sure of its origin - was there.... JC: There were four wharves there. The variation (in color) will be more subtle than shown. DC: You feel enclosed, and then it opens up to the Harbor. It's important that view remain. WR:

What is the BRA view of the parking? DAC: The BRA is very encouraged by this, and fully supports (as does BTD) the removal of the parking garage. This is a perfect T.O.D. site. WR: So, it's consistent with policy. DAC: Yes. MD: Public Comment? Bob O'Brien of the Downtown North Association: We are very supportive of the Project. We encourage you to move it forward. With that, a motion was made to approve, and it was seconded and **VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the modified schematic design for the Lovejoy Wharf Project NPC in the North Station Economic Development Area.**

The next item was a presentation of the **Northampton Square Project**. Eva Ehrlich (EE) of Trinity introduced the team, which included Hank Keating (HK) of Trinity, Sean Sanger (SS) of CWDG, Jamie Fay of Fort Point Associates, and Ed Bradford (EB) of The Architectural Team. EE: The complex was originally built ca. 1969 as the Nurses' School for the Boston City Hospital. It was acquired in 1996 by the Boston Public Health Commission. They recently issued an RFP for rehabilitation of the residential towers; we responded and proposed also a new building; we have working with the BPHC since 2010. We were at the BCDC last year for the tower rehab. (DAC reminded the Commission that that was a vote NOT to review that rehab piece.) EE: It's under construction - as of a month ago. And now we are in with the tower.

EB presented the design, starting with the locus. He showed an aerial with labeled components: 102 units at 860 Harrison, 240 units at 35 Northampton, the Fitness Center, the Miranda Creamer office building (50,000 SF, 6 stories), the BMC building that crosses over Mass Ave, the 3-story garage podium (with offices along Mass Ave) that connects all. EB: The site lacks urban vitality. It's noticeable as you walk about; there's a lack of transparency and a lot of infrastructure. The components do NOT have their own entry, including the South End Fitness Center and the Miranda Creamer Building, both entered through 35 Northampton Street. EB then showed the overall site plan in axonometric, pointing out the new pieces. EB: 860 Harrison and the new tower will be addressed tonight. Plus there is green along the sides, and on the garage roof. (Shows a larger site plan, noting new entries and an entry court for the Miranda Creamer. Goes through floor plans and footprints, again noting new access points.) The commercial space along Mass Ave is not changing. But what *is* changing is the mechanical space at the corner of Mass Ave and Harrison; this is changing to commercial space, with the mechanicals going up to the roof. LE asked about the blue ramp-shaped structure shown. Another TAT person responded that this was in Phase 1 and under construction, a single-story glass structure replacing an existing bad condition, with views through, and greenery. HK: That building (35) will be condo-ized. Trinity is redeveloping components, and will control certain aspects, but not all.

EB continued with a few more plans, and showed diagrams of the genesis of the tower idea, and the notion for the shaping of the top to hide equipment and to mark entries at the high pulled-up corners. EB noted that the roof form was unique in the complex to differentiate it from 35 Northampton. The diagram process was then repeated from a different perspective; a series of perspectives were shown, first higher, then lower views, notably looking toward the northeast corner and the Miranda Creamer entry court. WR: Where are the entries currently? EB:

Through the garage directly, or via 35 Northampton. MD: It seems like a major benefit is the corner space, with the court and arcade. WR: What about the retail along Mass Ave? EE: Actually, those are BPHC offices, recently refurbished. There is no retail there. EB: There is a lot of equipment and loading operations currently which disrupt the allee of trees. It's not as good as you might think just looking at the trees. (Shows a view of the Project in the future context with other approved projects, then a section through the tower, then an Albany elevation.) The materials are textured precast and 'interwoven' metal panels, then curtainwall at each end. Along Northampton, the enhanced form of the connector relates to the dramatic top of the tower.

SS: There will be trees at the back of sidewalk along Northampton. This will be a better condition, and still allows a 8-9' sidewalk. We are treating it better along Harrison as well, with trees again at the back of sidewalk. At the new tower, we have more columnar trees in the standard street tree locations; then, at the corner, there is a connection through more defined trees. Here we have banding to lessen the scale, and are adding benches. We are keeping views open. The trees here are in a more garden-like setting, with planting at the base. Along Mass Ave, there are existing bus shelters. We are replacing street trees elsewhere, and creating a small court at the corner of Harrison with the new commercial space. Currently a low fence segregates the plantings; we are hoping to eliminate that. The green roof enhancements are all being studied; we have to work with abutters there. AL: Is there any way for the public to come out or up to the roof? SS: Not directly, but there is for those who visit, or use the facilities. EE: What's being shown on the roof is the result of input from abutter users. HK: There is also a possibility of BPHC space in the tower as well. That's an option, and not decided yet. MD: With no FAR change? HK: No.

AL: This block was a major undertaking of the urban renewal era. It has about it one aspect that would not be true today - it's not built to the max. It has high and low spaces. I'm glad you are continuing that idea. The block has interesting qualities - it has lower buildings at the edges, with the highest elements more built in. That's important to keep in mind when adding a new large element. This can handle a big impact; it could be higher. But it is unique in coming right to the street. In being as long as it is, and coming out, it is not truly in the spirit of the block. I see you're struggling with that - the arcade, e.g. It feels close. It could be recessed - and higher, thinner. My second point is that it's opportunistic, but confusing, that you are using the tower as entries for others. The biggest sign is on the Fitness Center. But in doing that, you've lost the sense of entry to the residential tower. Your building needs its own presence.

DM: I want to agree with Andrea's comment on the approach to the sidewalk. There is a lot to like here. Andrea's note on its history is correct. There is one other aspect: at the time, this was *not* a pleasant part of the City. So this is protective, the entries impenetrable. With all of this investment - but maybe this is beyond your purview - it feels like there should be more invested to open it up. There's green all around; that's good. But why not have those additional entries *on* those buildings? You said the BPHC has invested in those spaces - that has to be 500' of those uses. There has to be more ways you can take in, even as simple an idea as giving it more entries. I don't know how you can engage your partner. But maybe you can enter at more points. WR: I want to really compliment the architects with the presentation. It was really clear. I want to second what David said - put up the landscape plan? - it's interesting.

You've added so much on three sides. Is there more you can do to make the space along Mass Ave more attractive, even if retail is only in the future?

HK: We have been working with the BPHC and the community for two years. The BPHC is not in financial condition to do that; the space is only 30' deep, not good retail. Andrea's point is interesting. We *had* proposed that originally, and fought for it for 18 months. We met a firestorm of opposition (mostly regarding the necessary elimination of the Fitness Center to move the tower inboard). We finally gave it up. What is left, is the *only* footprint left. And that is already cantilevered over other elements - we could at most get another foot or two. The point about the entry was interesting too; we can work on that. LE: I'm thinking about the fortress-like character of the block. There may be an opportunity for lightness along Albany. With the columns, it all looks heavy coming down. The open space there is a kind of tease. HK went to the plan and explained the constraints and why they did what they did. MD: We will have to discuss this in Committee. We will want a model. There are two important corners - and Albany. You have to be on the street to understand. DM: Perhaps a model is of more use if it focuses on the 3-D aspects, the lower floors, at a larger scale - Mass Ave to Northampton along Albany. DC asked for more information on how the circulation works. AL: If adjustments can be made...I feel it's *just* over the line. I would be interested in any studies you can do. Higher, and smaller in footprint would be better for the block. With that, the Northampton Square Project was sent to Design Committee.

DM and WR were recused for the next item and left. The next item was a presentation of the **Ruth Mulan Chu Chao Center at the Harvard Business School**. Martha Ondras (MO) introduced herself - Director of Design at the Harvard Business School - and her team, including Gary Hilderbrand (GH) of Reed Hilderbrand and Robb Chandler (RC) of Goody Clancy. MO: We were before you on October 1st, and this is the first Project in the IMP that was approved then. We are in Design Development now. Our purpose: Harvard has a 1800-student MBA program, but also a robust Executive Education program, which has a residential program, with intensive living and learning. We are guided by principles, three main pieces - the vision first. (Goes through in more detail.) This is an important arrival point, and the site...relates to the architectural legacy, but also the emerging context. Here, two axes intersect.

GH then corrected the horizontality of the projector. He started with views taken from the IMP presentation, noting the new Projects along East Drive and Harvard Way. This (site) forms a quadrangle, but is also an important path in the pedestrian connection from the (Weeks) bridge to Barry's Corner. This is a direct link between the legacy campus and the Exec Ed campus. (Shows another IMP view, looking down East Drive. Shows the overall site plan, and the public pathway built along the River's edge with Tata Hall. Shows the enlarged site plan around the Chao Center: the Exec Ed quad, the North Court, the arrival area, the loading area. GH: We have been helping in the discussion with DCR that the Weeks Bridge should become accessible. The Chao Center is more south than Kresge is today, and so allows a much stronger connection to the East Drive.

RC showed the site plan with the ground floor plan included, noting the differences from the

Kresge footprint. He noted the context, the mix of architecture - one is moving through their building into a different world. RC: The Chao Center straddles this point; it has to have a visual terminus, but also a pathway through. The program is more public at the base, most active, and engaged with the landscape. Dining is on the second floor. The third floor has classrooms and terraces. RC then showed a series of views, starting with a view from Harvard Way, and then related oblique views - the arrival along the Drive, and from the pedestrian area further beyond. RC: There is a wide aperture at the north, too (shows a view from the North Court, then a view from the Weeks Bridge approach).

AL: I understand your approach. I don't understand the origins of your splay, how that came about. RC: The geometry of the arrival paths. And the relationship to other buildings, and the tunnel infrastructure. The angle allows the visual connection to other building entries. MO: The dining program was enlarged, but the hub passage can be more compact. GH: A big breakthrough was also to allow the direct visual connection through from the bridge. LE: I have a question about the decision to set back from East Drive. The building lines, and Kresge, are closer. RC: Actually, we are much closer (40-50') to East Drive than Kresge. LE: I wonder if you looked at widening the space at the corner with Tata - it seems tight. I like the aspect that embraces the Weeks Bridge, celebrates it. Can't it work the other way? GH: We set it up to do that. There's a strong visual lead, seen in the perspective (points). RC: There is an overture in the building expression. LE: A lot of the Exec Ed you won't see immediately, but a lot of graduate students at the HBS will see and appreciate it.

AL: It's hard to tell. You're either just out of line, or aligned with Tata. I agree with the concern about tightness. You don't *want* the plane to connect precisely; move it a bit north, or west. The relationship between Harvard Way, and the path to the Weeks Bridge - a sweep and bend - could be stronger. The figure of the space isn't as strong as it could be to receive that. There is an opportunity to connect strongly *through* the building. An exciting way, the hub experience. Which could have more architectural unity, (the sides) could be more alike. The bridge side is very exciting, but there's no reason it couldn't be so on both sides. You don't have to brand Exec Ed that way, with the literal language of the rotunda and form. Look for an expression which works on both sides in some form. RC: There is a multiplicity of opinions on this on the HBS campus. LE: As you're looking at the more public side - if this is the public edge, you're demonstrating that mix, that energy. The building hides that. It could be more transparent, show those conversations. I wouldn't have screened it.... AL: The north entry has that quality. LE: And the east. But not the west.

MD: I'm not sure I agree; the east is a *very* public side of the building. I don't disagree that the whole building should have that energy. But the more public side...I think we draw the line at architecture, however much we might be inclined. Since there is no quorum, we can't act until next month, but I'll leave it up to you. AL: I would be interested in a study. This has no front. All the sides - there should be a more familial relationship as you go around. It's a duel in the middle of everything. I would be interested in seeing evolution in that direction. RC: These are topics we've been discussing. With that, the Harvard Chao Center 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 7:39 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission is scheduled for December 3, 2013. The recording of the November 5, 2013 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.