

DRAFT MINUTES

BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, January 6th, 2015, starting in the BRA Board Room, 9th Floor, Boston City Hall, and beginning at 5:21 p.m.

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

The Co-Vice-Chair, Mike Davis (MD), announced that this was the meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission that meets the first Tuesday of every month and welcomed all persons interested in attending. He added thanks to the Commissioners for the contribution of their time to the betterment of the City and its Public Realm. This hearing was duly advertised on Sunday, December 21, in the BOSTON HERALD.

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

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

Votes were passed for signature. MD asked for a report from the Review Committee on the **14-20 West Broadway Project**. David Carlson (DAC) first noted the two months of sign-up sheets, so that possible gatherings could be planned in advance, and that the BRA Director had suggested meeting with the BCDC before the next monthly meeting on February 3rd. DAC then reported that the site on West Broadway, home to the Cornerstone Bar, was proposed as a luxury condominium project and was immediately adjacent to a smaller project currently under construction and a larger one seen by the BCDC - the (South Boston) Hotel on Dorchester Avenue. At about 120,000 SF, the Project was over the threshold of 100,000 SF and a vote to review was recommended. A motion was made, seconded, and it was

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 14 West Broadway Residential Project at 14-20 West Broadway in the South Boston neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Chain Forge Hotel Project**. DAC noted that the Chain Forge, like the Ropewalk, was one of the two most significant buildings in the Navy Yard, both in need of restoration. The Commission voted not to review the Ropewalk due to minimal exterior changes and a modest public realm dictated by NPS

guidelines, but saw a presentation. Here, similar to Emerson College's restoration of the Little Building, there was minimal change to the building but a new exterior in many places and a modest addition necessary to achieve room count, but minimally visible. The Chain Forge Project will be reviewed by four historic agencies as well as the BRA, but the degree of intervention and its importance also qualified it for BCDC review. As does its size, at 180,000 SF. It was then moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Chain Forge Hotel Project in the Historic Monument Area within the Charlestown Navy Yard in the Charlestown neighborhood.

The next item was a report from the Review Committee on **The Point Project NPC**. DAC noted that this Project had been seen by the Commission and conditionally approved in 2013. However, cost of construction led the developer to request additional height and density, and this process has been set in motion. Although possibly something the Commission might have supported in any case, the change was sufficient to merit a new look, and so a formal vote to review by the BCDC was recommended. Although the original conditions might remain in any new vote, there would also be additional information regarding the site's artwork. It was duly moved, seconded, and

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

Linda Eastley (LE), David Manfredi (DM), and Daniel St. Clair (DS) arrived. The next item was a report from the Design Committee on the proposed **Melnea Cass Parcel 9 Project Changes**. Stephen Chung (SC) reprised the issues discussed in Design Committee, noting a few such as the hotel entry, the expression along Washington Street (endwall stair), how the ground floor was treated, and the space in front. (Uses an older ground floor plan to illustrate changes. Shows a view, then shows the new proposal.) SC: We've reintroduced an angled geometry at the corner; we really couldn't do the entry *directly* on Washington. (Shows an aerial view from Melnea.) The site has a strong path across it, and we have now pulled more program across to animate it. At the rear, it's open at the base except at the residential podium. (Shows plan.) The corner entry is now more clearly aligned with the drop-off behind. There are more public uses along the ground floor [of the hotel], it's more glassy. The parking has a screen. We have an initial concept on the open space design. (Shows views of the corner and the building.) There is a break in the facade to break up the mass, and a tilted visor above. At the residential portion, there are also [vertical] breaks...here, they are more angled, incised; this building is more vertically oriented than the hotel. At the residential, there are also blades that come out to accentuate light and shadow. At the back, there is an open canopy over the parking and drop-off, creating dramatic shadows. (Shows a series of views, going around the block.)

Andrea Leers (AL): I wasn't at the last meeting, but at the penultimate one. I appreciate [the

reintroduction of] the angle. It does define and augment the entries, it helps both, and it's enough to define Melnea. Moving the stair [at Washington] helped a good deal. DM agreed: This makes more sense; you've taken the comments well. SC then showed landscape images - between the sidewalks, the curved bike path setting, birch screens at the garage. Lynn Wolff (LW): I wonder - at the garage edge, perhaps move away from the building. There's really nothing going on. SC: Shauna had suggested that; we felt we would show the simple, direct path. LE: I like Shauna's ideas of creating topography, and Lynn's, of moving away from the garage. Kirk Sykes (KS): What is the sidewalk width? SC: 12'. KS: There are some areas where seating might be desired. What I miss is the kicked-up corner. It kind of held the corner; I don't think it would take much to hold that corner. Other than that, I like what you've done. Bill Rawn (WR): You still need to resolve the space between the uses - and that counterflow lane [along Shawmut] is tricky. DS: It seems much improved. With that, and no comment from the public, it was moved, seconded and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the changes to the schematic design for Urbanica's Parcel 9 Project on Melnea Cass Boulevard at Washington Street (bounded also by Ball Street and Shawmut Avenue) in the Lower Roxbury neighborhood.

The next scheduled item was a presentation of the **14 West Broadway Residential Project**. The Project team was not prepared, and so the next item instead became (while DAC hunted down equipment) a presentation of the **Chain Forge Hotel Project**. Tom Miller (TM) of The Kavanaugh Group introduced himself. TM: We have the designation to redevelop the Chain Forge building, in the Historic Monument Area, where the Navy made chains and anchors, into a 230-room hotel and restaurant. Joel Bargmann (JB) will go through the plans. JB then showed an old photo, noting the base building was built in 1905, with a 1940's addition above. He showed an area plan, noting the headhouse location, and photos of Second Avenue, where the loading would be. He showed a historic photo of the interior. JB: We did an equipment study for the Park Service which determined which equipment had to stay for interpretation. JB then showed a ground floor plan, noting the hotel entry and lobby area, and the restaurant in the headhouse. Using photos, he showed where the windows of the hotel program would be. He showed a section, noting the necessary addition....upper hotel floor plans were mostly a donut. The fifth floor was set back, maintaining the historic profile from most vantage points. He showed comparative elevations: an idealized existing condition vs. the proposed. JB: It's not a pure restoration back to the original condition, but we are working with the National Park Service (and going through their approval process) to keep the WWII and other alterations. The NPS requirements are the reason for the presentation showing the changes in large and partial elevations. At the main entry, we are hoping to work with the NPS to make it glassier, with a canopy.

Paul McDonough (PM): Has NPS approved the addition? TM: They've seen it. We are going through their process. David Hacin (DH): This is a fabulous project. I hope you will get the addition at the top. I'd want the modern interventions to translate into a path through, so as you walk through, you see the contrast of new and old. The use itself is wonderful for the Navy

Yard; it hasn't really been a use there before. PM: You might take a look at the North Bennett Street School on North Street, with its new intervention. TM noted working with [the NPS] - and years of contamination. LW: Second Avenue is an important pedestrian passage; the plan for that is key. TM: We are applying for a series of grants to cobble together. Having the public able to traverse that is important to us. KS: Signage? TM: We will work with the hotel, who will want visibility. KS: And lighting? TM: The hotel will want lighting...the neighbors, we'll see. PM asked about the landscaping. TM: The building is up to the sidewalk on three sides. We will treat the area of loading access and repair the sidewalks. If they are wide enough, we'll have trees. AL: I agree with David's comments. On the elevations, not the upper, but the lower (along Second) - the diagram seems to be two large floors. On the lower 'floor,' rather than express the two floors now there, I would work to make it a single expression. DH: How would the Commissioners feel about approving this? Andrea's comment was good, but aside from that.... It was then (with no comment from the public) moved, seconded, and

VOTED: That the Commission recommends approval of the schematic design for the proposed Chain Forge Hotel Project in the Historic Monument Area within the Charlestown Navy Yard in the Charlestown neighborhood.

The next item returned to the presentation of the **14 West Broadway Residential Project**. George Morancy (GM) began talking while DAC assisted the team to set up. GM noted the location, adjacent to the Hotel previously approved, but not yet under construction - and another building under construction on the other side. He thanked DAC for guidance, noting they have animated the ground floor with a restaurant. Using views, he described the entry, then the drop-off at the rear. The second floor was entirely commercial.

DH: One question. How does this relate to the zoning height and FAR? GM: This area is zoned multi-family residential (and I wrote the zoning when I was at the BRA) - a maximum height of 35', and an FAR of 1.0. When conceived in 1990, it made sense; it doesn't make sense in this environment. We're at FAR 8, with multiple violations, but I gave that in the preamble. KS: What do we do when this is eight times the zoning? DH asked about the process. GM: There were a number (6-7) of community meetings with unanimous support, especially from the Broadway Association, in whose purview this is. Chris Drew (CD) of RCA LLC began presenting. LE asked for a site plan. CD showed just the immediate site, then an aerial, instead. LW: We really need a site plan that shows the relationship to the hotel and to the area. MD: Consider that one of a number of things we will want to see in Committee. DH: Including a model. AL (indicating the aerial): Which shows all *that*.

CD went through the floor plans. LW: Could you point out the hotel edge? CD did so. This prompted a back-and-forth discussion trying to understand the relationship of the buildings and light wells on both sides, the internal unit layout. The information given was confusing. Developer Ryan Sillery tried to explain that the hotel and 14 Broadway podiums met, and the buildings rose above them, with space between. (A similar but tighter scenario is on the other side.) AL: Could you explain what is your architectural idea? CD essayed an explanation, suggesting they were picking up on their neighbors. DH: If the building were not an 'L' shape,

but a simple bar, that would benefit both you and the hotel. A model would really help; I'm surprised you don't have one. AL: I haven't heard a good story about the podium. The buildings around you are generally simple. Your penthouse is set back, but that wouldn't be, elsewhere. I would look at that. And your balcony decisions. LW: Explain the site - going out about six blocks to give a sense of how this fits would be helpful. KS: It's hard to figure out the relationship of the building to those on either side. Not just shadow studies, but adjacencies. MD: In the absence of any proposed modified zoning, it's up to us to recommend changes [from the background]. It's impossible to recommend as it is, with this condition. We will see you in Committee. With that, the 14 West Broadway Residential Project was sent to Committee. DM and PM were recused from the next item. The next item was a presentation of **The Point NPC**. Leslie Cohen (LC) of Samuels introduced the team, including Sam Luccino (SL) of Arquitectonica, Keith LeBlanc (landscape architect), and Abbey Goodman (AG) of Goodman Taft. LC: We received approvals in 2013, and began looking at tweaks. With costs, that changed into a higher building; we have also added ownership. There are 15 floors of apartments, 11 of condo, and one added floor of mechanicals. We have had a series of meetings...the height increase as a limit of the background zoning was approved in November/December. We are in the NPC process now, and expect the BRA Board to vote in February, the Zoning Commission in March. Abbey Goodman is helping us with the art selection process; we have nothing specific now.

SL noted the program changes; retail was down somewhat. He went through the locus, then a neighborhood site plan, then the Project site plan, noting the chamfered relationship to the Trilogy building, and the park area where the art would go. SL: We are still working on a wind mitigation device. (Shows upper floors, then back to the ground floor, noting no parking in the new building, but loading. WR asked about the ground floor - how you get to the entries [from parking and opposite sides]. SL: You walk around the building, not through it. LC: That hasn't changed from before. SL: On the second floor, there are more amenities, and less retail. Once we started looking at it, the amenity space grew - plus, all the complications of second-story retail. (Shows upper floor plans, then elevations.) Having condominiums meant we had to re-do the mullion spacing, and the mechanical floor between the uses will look like it's inhabited. LE: Did the height of the base decrease? SL: Yes, about 6 feet. The glass rails increase the visual difference. And the vertical bands are not as deep or wide. WR: There still seems a difference in the sides. SL: It may be the rendering on one version shows the rear, which is wider [than the front]. WR: It still seems different. The elevations vary more than the 25% change. AL: It would be good to see the plans side by side. SL: There's no change. AL: You said the sawtooth changed. SL: *Minor* changes. DH: A model would be really helpful to understand this. Context, with the old and then the new. SL: We have it - we just didn't bring it.

LW: You said 'tweaking.' What was the reason for the 25% 'tweak?' LC: We got pricing, and then began to value-engineer. We didn't like the results. We went back to the original [details] and couldn't afford to build it; this enables us. AL: Question about the change in the proportion of the break...that's now a function of the program, since that's now different. KS: Why, if the glass is the same? SL: It is. KS: Then why change *there*? SL: The mechanicals are where we change between the products. KS: But, if the glass is the same, it shouldn't matter. SL: There

will be louvers, too. KS: Show us in Committee, so we understand better. SL then showed perspective images, before and after views. KS: These views look different. The frames should be more visible, depending on size, but I'm perceiving the opposite. SL: Maybe a material change. DH: I like the stronger expression of the frames. SL then showed a view of the base.

AG then introduced herself and Dana Deitsch, part of their team. AG: Samuels hired us to develop an art strategy across all their projects as they build the neighborhood. We are assessing artists and options now. Art at the point - it's a real gateway. How can we get to a *referential* place, and a meeting place, that you want to have the experience of, like 'The Bean' in Chicago. We are considering, as examples for caliber and concept:

Dan Graham [*pavilions; self-reflection, but also shelter*]

Isa Cerizken [*German-born, forms related to modernist architecture - might really respond to building and space - could have a collection of objects*]

Martin Puryear [*more organic relationships, stone objects*]

Liz Larner [*3-D color masses; sculptures vary widely*]

Olafur Eliasson [*viewing machines; how you engage people and place through sculpture*](most known)

Erin Shirreff [*due at the ICA in a year; example shown responds to a Tony Smith work...different folded plane angles*]

DH: Great idea. AG: Once we have a selection, there will be extensive work. DH: The idea that artwork engages, and gets people to go there - working in concert with your landscape architect...I'm really excited. It's a good direction. KS: The building is unique in its challenging scale; the art should be similar. Views and lighting are critical. MD: This will be a commissioned piece. So we don't expect to see it, but are interested in the criteria that you will use. AL: I've been involved in the art selection process on buildings we've done. The key to success is to define the intent, use, and purpose as closely as possible. You might want to define if it's something you look *at*, or go within to experience. AG: We will. LE: Whatever artist you choose, it would be amazing to think of something also at Landmark Center. This area, if you think about Boston - there are so many different disciplines here that you can mark or celebrate. WR: I'm wary of too many cooks. But I agree with Andrea's criteria. AG: 60' sounds big, but that's not large, here. WR: And it will be seen by a lot of cars. AG: And people walking by...colorful. AL: Do you expect to create a place where people actually linger? That would very much impact whom you would choose.

AL: One more thing on the building: I'm not persuaded by bringing the frames around [on the east]. The less contrasted version served the building as a whole better. KS: I question the frame proportions...I prefer the prior. Look at the base [height proportion] and forms. MD: The model. And more about the elevations...and the site plan, since that was the earlier condition. LC: We may have to leave that as a condition. With that, The Point NPC 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 8:47 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission

was scheduled for February 3, 2015. The recording of the January 6, 2015 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.