

MINUTES FOR THE BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION MAY 07, 2024

*This meeting was held virtually. A recording of this meeting is available upon request.
Please reach out to bcdc@boston.gov for more information.*

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC) was called to order by Co-Chair Linda Eastley at 5:08 on Tuesday, MAY 07, 2024.

ATTENDEES

The following members of the Boston Civic Design Commission were present: Ex-officio member and BPDA Director of Planning Aimee Chambers, Ex-officio member and BPDA Director of Design Diana Fernandez, Co-Chairs Linda Eastley and Mimi Love, and Commissioners Jonathan Evans, David Hacin, David Manfredi, Catherine Morris, William Rawn, and Kirk Sykes. The following members of the BPDA Staff were present: Executive Director BCDC and Senior Urban Designer Kristina Ricco, Deputy Director of Urban Design Seth Riseman, and Urban Design Assistant Lizzie Turac.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously
VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FOR THE APRIL 02, 2024, MONTHLY MEETING AND APRIL 16, 2024, DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS.

REPORT FROM BPDA DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

539-551 CENTRE STREET, JAMAICA PLAIN (AKA FORBES BUILDING) (80B)

Executive Director Kristina Ricco gave a report from the BPDA Design Review Committee on the proposed project at 539-551 CENTRE STREET, JAMAICA PLAIN, also known as FORBES BUILDING, recommending the proposal for consideration by the commission.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT 539-551 CENTRE STREET, JAMAICA PLAIN.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY 10-YEAR INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN, ALLSTON CAMPUS (80D)

Executive Director Kristina Ricco gave a report from the BPDA Design Review Committee on the proposed HARVARD UNIVERSITY 10-YEAR INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN, ALLSTON CAMPUS, recommending the proposal for consideration by the commission. Commissioners Hacin and Rawn recused themselves from the proceedings.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED HARVARD UNIVERSITY 10-YEAR INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN, ALLSTON CAMPUS.

WHITE STADIUM, FRANKLIN PARK (80B)

Executive Director Kristina Ricco gave a report from the BPDA Design Review Committee on the proposed project at 450 WALNUT AVENUE, MATTAPAN, also known as WHITE STADIUM, recommending the proposed project for consideration by the commission. Commissioner Sykes recused themselves from the proceedings.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT WHITE STADIUM, FRANKLIN PARK.

PRESENTATIONS FOR REVIEW AND PUBLIC TESTIMONY

80-100 SMITH STREET, MISSION HILL

Representatives of the proponent team, including Ben Wan (RODE) and Kristina Stevens (Arcadis), presented the proposed project. Commissioner Manfredi abstained from voting. Commissioners Eastley, Evans, Hacin, Morris, Rawn, and Sykes participated in the deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners were generally supportive of the changes made to the proposed project in response to feedback received at previous meetings. "I feel like the project has definitely moved into a place, from an architectural point of view, of greater clarity and a really clear relationship of the parts as they relate to the public health building." "I really like this perspective. It does show that you've simplified the palette as we asked you to do to try to make the three buildings hang together. When we saw this previously, especially 80 Smith Street seemed quite institutional. 100 Smith Street has very successfully begun to resolve itself without losing all its interest and still has some referential nature to what's across the street. I think the last image that you showed still reinforces that I think you could still work to make 80 Smith Street hang together a little more. In this view, the building still looks quite institutional and somewhat impenetrable. I do like your attempts to break it down towards Mission Main and towards the park." Following public testimony, Commissioners asked clarifying questions regarding the nature of the entitlement sought and expressed concern for comments heard during public testimony, which focused primarily on proposed building height. Members of the proponent team, including Sean Curran and Ben Wan, responded to comments heard during public testimony.

Public testimony was given by Gary Walling (member of the IAG), Patricia Flaherty (member of the IAG), Alison Pultinas experienced technical difficulties and gave testimony via chat, and Cindy Walling.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THOSE ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT RELATED TO BUILDING ARCHITECTURE AND SITE CONFIGURATION AND RECOMMEND THAT BPDA STAFF CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE IMPACT ADVISORY GROUP AND THE MISSION HILL COMMUNITY TO RESOLVE CONTINUED CONCERNS RELATED TO BUILDING MASSING IN ADVANCE OF BPDA BOARD CONSIDERATION AND THAT THE PROPOSED PROJECT RETURN TO THE COMMISSION DURING THE COURSE OF BPDA DESIGN REVIEW TO REPORT ON THE RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE.

232 A STREET, SOUTH BOSTON WATERFRONT (80C PDA AMENDMENT and 80B)

Representatives of the proponent team, including Lauren Ferrando (Tishman Speyer), Ian Downing (Mikyoung Kim), and Charles Klee (Payette), presented the proposed project. Commissioners Eastley, Evans, Hacin, Love, Manfredi, Morris, Rawn, and Sykes participated in the deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners were generally supportive of the changes made to the proposed project in response to feedback received at previous meetings. "The work that you've done on the ground plane is very much in the spirit of the commentary we had." "The building, the whole planning of the site makes really important contributions to the Fort Point Channel, and understanding all the restrictions that come with building on top of the tunnel. I really appreciate the simplicity. Showing what you've shown of your first design proposal and where you are now, the building has gotten better for having accommodated those comments about the west elevation. I think it's very beautiful. I think the celebration of the structure tells anyone a little bit of the story about what is happening below ground here which is really so extraordinary." "It's a very powerful facade." "The generosity of the open space provided by the site plan is an important precedent for future development along the Fort Point Channel."

Public testimony was given by Zy Baer.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BPDA BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED PROJECT UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ARTICLE 80 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY, CHARLES RIVER CAMPUS TWO-YEAR IMP (80D) AND WARREN TOWERS RENOVATION (80B)

Representatives of the proponent team, including Laura Rushfeldt (CBT Architects), Steven Thomas (MDS), James Heroux (MDS), and Sonia Richards (Boston University) presented the proposed project. Commissioners Love and Rawn recused themselves from the proceedings. Commissioners Eastley, Evans, Hacin, Manfredi, Morris, and Sykes participated in the deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners were generally supportive of the changes made to the proposed projects in response to feedback received at previous meetings. Commissioners were generally supportive of the Institutional Master Plan. Regarding the Proposed Institutional Project (PIP) referred to as the "Pardee School," "we had questions about the actual siting of the building footprint, how the decisions we made about how it would fit into that space, currently a parking lot, and those were very clearly answered." Commissioners were supportive of proposed improvements to the Warren Towers facade and asked the proponent to explore additional opportunities to increase activation and animation of the ground floor facade. Commissioners encouraged the proponent to continue study opportunities for increased mechanical screening.

Public testimony was given by Pam Beale (BU Community Task Force) and Brandon Chan.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BPDA BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED IMP (ART 80D) UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ARTICLE 80 REVIEW PROCESS AND RECOMMEND THAT THE BPDA BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT WARREN TOWERS (ART 80B) UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ARTICLE 80 REVIEW PROCESS WITH THE PROVISIO THAT ADDITIONAL DESIGN

REVIEW ATTENTION BE GIVEN TO STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVATION OF THE GROUND FLOOR FACADE AND SCALE OF TREATMENT OF MECHANICAL PENTHOUSE SCREENING AND THAT THE PROPOSED PROJECT RETURN TO THE COMMISSION DURING THE COURSE OF BPDA DESIGN REVIEW TO REPORT ON RESOLUTION OF THESE TOPICS.

539-551 CENTRE STREET, JAMAICA PLAIN (FORBES BUILDING)

BPDA Director of Planning Aimee Chambers summarized the planning context for the BPDA review of the proposed project. Representatives of the proponent team, including Karla Chaffe (Nixon Peabody) and Chris Benedict (Chris Benedict R.A.), presented the proposed project. BPDA Senior Urban Designer Meghan Richards summarized BPDA Design Review feedback shared with the proponent team to date. Commissioners Eastley, Evans, Hacin, Love, Manfredi, Morris, Rawn, and Sykes participated in the deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners were generally supportive of the proposed project, however, Commissioners expressed some skepticism about maintenance and the financial feasibility of the proposed facade assembly, which directly incorporates plants. "Knowing that the margins are small for the ability of affordable rehab projects to deliver on things, I commend the confidence of the proposal. I'm a little anxious about what happens 6 or 8 months from now if you're in a situation where the ability to deliver on that might not pencil out and what that means for the ultimate agenda for the design. If you don't have those planters, this becomes a fully monolithic box without texture. We encourage you to think a little bit about what the plan B could be." "This site was unremarkable. I think you're leading us to something that is remarkable. On the merits of the resilience and sustainability approach, high marks. On the objective of affordability continuation, high marks. On the inclusion of the community in a site that today is rather impenetrable, high marks."

There was no public testimony.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THAT THE BPDA BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED PROJECT UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ARTICLE 80 PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS WITH THE PROVISIO THAT ADDITIONAL DESIGN REVIEW ATTENTION BE GIVEN TO ASPECTS OF THE PUBLIC REALM AND SITE PLAN.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, ALLSTON CAMPUS TEN-YEAR IMP

BPDA Director of Planning Aimee Chambers summarized the planning context for the BPDA review of the proposed project. Representatives of the proponent team, including Mark Handley (Harvard University) and Alexandra Offiong (Harvard University), presented the proposed project. BPDA Senior Urban Designer Kristina Ricco summarized BPDA Design Review feedback shared with the proponent team to date. Commissioners Hacin and Rawn recused themselves from the proceedings. Commissioners Eastley, Evans, Love, Manfredi, Morris, and Sykes participated in the deliberations. Discussion: Commissioners asked that the proponent prepare additional materials for review. "It's helpful for us to understand the massing implications, the context, and also understand some of the basic systems of the campus." "I'm trying to identify patterns in how the campus is organized and

how it works, and I'm really struggling to see what those patterns are. I want to understand the overall logic. You talked about some really great attributes, how it ties into the community, how it has connectivity, and I want to see all of these things, but I just don't see it in little rectangles on a site plan." "I support the idea of some kind of massing so we can be better informed." "I'm going to challenge you to think a bit about 4 and 5 because of their presence on the river and on a major arterial street, and also in the context of how the Data Science building changed some of the thinking about the BU campus. You have these highly visible buildings that have a chance to be markers in the landscape." "I'll mention buildings 4 and 5 in the context of an old but very interesting master plan that was done many years ago by The Architects Collaborative for that core group of athletic facilities."

There was no public testimony.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THE PROPOSED PROJECT FOR FURTHER REVIEW AT THE BCDC DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE.

WHITE STADIUM, FRANKLIN PARK

BPDA Deputy Chief of Urban Design Diana Fernandez summarized the planning context for the BPDA review of the proposed project. Representatives of the proponent team, including Tamara Roy (Stantec) and Chris Bridle (Reed Hildebrand), presented the proposed project. BPDA Senior Landscape Architect Sam Valentine summarized BPDA Design Review feedback shared with the proponent team to date. Commissioner Sykes recused themselves from the proceedings. Commissioners Eastley, Evans, Hacin, Love, Manfredi, Morris, and Rawn participated in the deliberations.

Discussion: Commissioners were generally supportive of the "design ethos" of the proposed project. Commissioners sought additional information regarding the proposed site plan, including its relationship to the Franklin Park Action Plan, the balance of proposed paved versus landscape areas, existing and proposed pedestrian circulation routes, articulation of "gameday" versus regular operations, and the various entry sequences and cues that help visitors understand this project as a public facility. Commissioners sought additional information about the relationship between open space programmatic elements, including the relationship between the "Playstead" and the "Grove," and the relationship between the "Overlook" and the Stadium. Commissioners sought additional information regarding the proposed architecture, including further study of the "dialogue between the existing and the new." Commissioners suggested that the concept of the "clamshell" could be expanded, "translated out and around the project so that the historic facade is not just a historic facade but that it's also part of a system." Commissioners requested additional drawings, including "flat" or "true" elevations and plans to support a more detailed review of the relationship between the canopy and the clamshell elements and requested that, where possible, additional information about the proposed scope of work outside the jurisdiction of the BCDC review be included to inform the review of those elements that are subject to review.

Public testimony was given by Jun Seung Lee, staff at the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, and Sarah Freeman.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: TO RECOMMEND THE PROPOSED PROJECT FOR FURTHER REVIEW AT THE BCDC DESIGN SUBCOMMITTEE.

ADJOURNMENT

At the conclusion of presentations for review and public testimony, it was

VOTED: TO ADJOURN.

APPROVED 2024 06 04