

MINUTES  
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, February 1, 2022, beginning at 5:00 p.m, and was held virtually via Zoom to ensure the safety of the public, staff members, and the BPDA Board Members during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members in attendance were Andrea Leers, Deneen Crosby, Jonathan Evans, Anne-Marie Lubenau, Linda Eastley, Jonathan Evans, Kathy Kottaridis, and William Rawn. Absent were Mimi Love, Mikyoung Kim, David Manfredi, David Hacin, Kirk Sykes, and Eric Höweler. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Representatives of the BSA attended. Patricia Cafferky, Ella Wise, Scott Slarsky, Meghan Richard, Caitlin Coppinger, and Edward Carmody 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 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 January 16, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the January 4, 2022 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on January 4, 11, 18, and 25. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the January 4, 11, 18, and 25, 2022 BCDC Meeting Minutes.**

---

Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the **Boston Landing Hotel/Guest Street Hotel** project. The project will be 135,000 SF, incorporating conference rooms, ground floor retail, and hotel uses. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Boston Landing Hotel/Guest Street Hotel project in the Brighton neighborhood.**

The next Review Committee report was for the **Longwood Place (305 Brookline Ave)** project. This PDA proposes 1.75 million SF of new mixed-use development. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Longwood Place (305 Brookline Ave) project in the Longwood Medical Area neighborhood.**

The third item was a report from the Review Committee on the **96-100 Rockwood Street** project. The project consists of 120,000 SF of residential development. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 96-100 Rockwood Street project in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.**

---

The Commission moved into Votes of Recommendation for projects from Design Committee. The only presentation from Design Committee was for **60 Guest Street**.

Nick Iselin: Design changes focused on the landscape, the public realm, and the facade, considering how the project sits in the context.

John Sullivan, SGA: The project team has broken down its massing, adding additional terracing and color with material changes.

Phil Colleran, : The landscape has simplified its paving materials and incorporated seating and activity nodes.

Deneen Crosby: Appreciates the changes to Guest Street. But what is happening across the street, and what is the relationship to the MBTA station? And what is the relationship between the project and the neighboring building to the East?

John Sullivan: The MBTA station is several buildings down Guest Street, and the 60 Guest street building is tight to the adjacent building to the East

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I appreciate the development of the project, and believe it holds its own now in the context

Linda Eastley: The building is so much warmer now, which is great, and I appreciate the lifting of the brow of the building on Guest street. Where the vertices scrim at the ground floor becomes more closed in, what is happening there? Is it a service program? Can something be done to open that more? And do places where the scrim is lifted correspond to the landscape design and furnishing? I would encourage embracing that relationship.

William Rawn: Thank you for taking the advice into consideration. I wonder about the celebration of the fire stair exists - will they be frequently used? Or would that celebratory moment be better used somewhere else where there is a different program?

Andrea Leers: I also wonder what happens to the East of the building, and where the next permeability happens along the street.

Public comments:  
No public comment

Hearing nothing else, a motion was made, it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommend approval for the 60 Guest Street project in the Brighton neighborhood.**

---

The Commission moved to project presentations, the first being for **Boston Landing Hotel/Guest Street Hotel** in the Brighton neighborhood.

Elizabeth Stifel, BPDA: Introduces the project.

Keith Craig, NB Development: Introduces the project's development context.

Harry Wheeler, Group One: Review of project program, use, context, and massing. The project has no on site parking or loading, making the ground floor able to be more open and vibrant. Form reinforces the 2 story datum line from the context.

Deneen Crosby: Is there any open space adjacent to your building that is not sidewalk and not your deck? I would appreciate hearing more in subcommittee about the building's relationship to the adjacent open spaces surrounding it, especially if the building has no open space of its own.

Linda Eastley: It's wonderful to see parking and service consolidated at a district level. My questions for subcommittee are: (1) What do you experience as you come down Guest Street? And (2) what are the building materials? They feel very dark, and like the opportunity to be inspired by the local artist community may be missed.

William Rawn: My question is, the main New Balance building is lively, and I'm wondering, is there a way to make the interspace between the original building and the hotel building something more interesting than a pair of 90 degree angles? So that the form of the building is more interesting than a squaring off.

Jonathan Evans: How can the geometric language of the sloped lawn be more acknowledged in the architecture of the hotel building? Can those two things speak to each other more both programmatically and formally? Can the massing of the podium and the tower be pushed apart more also? Currently they're blurring together and the building is reading as squat.

Andrea Leers: For me, simply extruding the parcel up and carving away at it may not be the best strategy. At the podium level that makes sense, but the tower could be expressed as its own object without being constrained by the stage of the parcel, like a tower in the garden or something 'in-the-round'. It may mean rethinking the massing, but I believe an opportunity is missed here.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: The photos of the model were extremely helpful, and I would encourage you to continue to work in this way going forward into subcommittee. Additionally, the design strategy currently feels like a wrapper, and I would push for it to be a massing strategy. And how does the design express that the use is a hotel?

Public comments: No public comment

A motion was made, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommend the Guest Street Hotel project continue in design committee.**

---

The next project presentation was for **Longwood Place (305 Brookline Ave)** in the Longwood Medical Area neighborhood.

Scott Slarsky, BPDA: Introduces the project.

Russell DiMartino, Skanska: Introduces the PDA's development trajectory.

Victor Vizgaitis, Sasaki: Overview of the PDA's planning context, the PDA's open space strategy, and the site massing strategy.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I keep coming back to the issues of texture and scale. How do we create a sense of intimacy in the midst of this scale of development? Is there a way of, rather than creating this large heart, could it be a series of connected human-scaled spaces instead?

Deneen Crosby: A broader look at the open space and character in this area would help me understand the context, and if this proposed open space is the right thing in the right place. Additionally, focusing on this site, focusing on the tree canopies, etc and more information on how this plan relates to what is there now would help. And finally, providing pedestrian circulation routes would be helpful to understand how people would approach and use the site. Is there a network of open spaces approaching this site and the Emerald Necklace?

Linda Eastley: We may want to break up review of this PDA by topics. One Design Committee Meeting might look at context and resolving relationships, another might look at massing and internal relationships, a third might look at the open space design, and a fourth might look at circulation and streetscape?

William Rawn: The PDA deals with massing, height, building location, open space, and street network. How do we connect the language you've articulated to the proposal? Will the open space you're proposing be enough for a development of this size? Can you bring precedents from other places that achieve this level of density and have succeeded as spaces?

Jonathan Evans: How are you going to measure the impacts of this project so you can tell that you succeed? What are you going to do well where others in the area have failed? How are you going to connect to the Emerald Necklace, and what does the backside of the project look like? How was the massing and height decided on?

Andrea Leers: I am concerned that the housing use seems like a peripheral piece of the site and could better be made a part of the site. Additionally, the mass directly adjacent to the open space feels far too large. It seems to want to be a pavilion in a garden, and instead it is just another very tall building.

Kathy Kottaridis: I would love to see some consideration of continuity of use and architecture on the site over time. Can you tell a story that gives a sense of the change that has come through this part of the city.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: Seeing some precedent examples of what you mean by a permeable and connected place would also be helpful.

Public comments: No public comment

A motion was made, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommend the Longwood Place (305 Brookline Ave) project continue in design committee.**

---

The Commission moved to its final project presentation, **96-100 Rockwood Street** in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.

Meghan Richard, BPDA: Introduces the project.

Matthew Zuker, New Meadow Development: Introduces the PDA's development trajectory.

Sho Itoh, LYX Group: Overview of the project's site plan and architecture typologies.

Andrea Leers: I understand and appreciate the approach to giving the ensemble a degree of intimacy and responding to the existing house. That said, we haven't seen a photograph or a topo map, and so I don't fully know how to respond. Nor have we seen, without your buildings, what the existing tree canopy looks like. What would it look like if you looked for existing openings in the tree canopy as places where you could surgically place the structures, as opposed to beginning with a circular road. You should then attempt to connect the structures afterwards instead. I also wonder about the suitability of the typologies that you've collected. I think the series of types that you've chosen to collect, and none of them are true to their form. Nor do they do honor to the existing house that's there. I would urge you to let go of the imagery of the typologies that you've collected, and develop your own 3 building types that work well as domestic structures.

Deneed Crosby: This area has lots of topography, and this plan should fit into the topography, because otherwise you cannot save any of the trees. The current site plan is designed as if the site is flat, which it is not. We need to see a topo map in relation to the design. I appreciate the approach with the forested areas in general, and the strategy for integrating new young trees. Finally, please specifically address what the CPS guidelines are and what you're doing to address them.

Anne-Marie Lubenau: I'm very concerned about this project's site plan and the need to be respectful of the site history, topography, and guidelines. And how do you create a sense of place on the site?  
Linda Eastley: Usonia, by FLW is another good precedent, because the structures are not celebrated, the landscape is celebrated. I also agree with Andrea's comment. 16 structures with 4 typologies is too many. I would encourage you to think about the landscape and its physical features as the glue of the project design. I would also ask for a physical model of the site, especially because of the typology.

Kathy Kottaridis: I would love to understand how the historic house is perceived from other places on the site, and how you will treat the site design around the historic house. I'm concerned with how

the mansion becomes just another structure in the plan, and would like to further understanding of how you plan to treat it differently.

Public comments: No public comment

A motion was made, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission recommend the 96-100 Rockwood Street project continue in design committee.**

---

The Commission was next presented a summary of the **2021 BCDC Annual Report** by BPDA staff.

---

There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:25 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for March 1, 2021. The recording of the January 4, 2021 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.