



**Christian Science Plaza Revitalization Project**  
**CAC Working Meeting #13**  
**Thursday, February 25, 2010**  
**Location: Christian Science Publishing House Building**

**CAC Attendees:**

Tom Aucella, Belvedere Condo Association  
Kelly Brilliant, Fenway Alliance  
Vanessa Calderon-Rosado, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA)  
Mark Cataudella, Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO)  
Christian Coffin, Hilton Hotel Boston Back Bay  
Sybil CooperKing, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB)  
Ryan Higginson, Resident of the South End  
Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association  
Donald Margotta, Church Park Apartments  
Joanne McKenna, Fenway Community Development Corporation (Fenway CDC)  
Craig Nicholson, American Planning Association (APA) – Massachusetts Chapter  
Bill Richardson, Fenway Civic Association (FCA)  
George Thrush, Boston Society of Architects (BSA)

**CAC Members Not in Attendance:**

Lee Steele, St. Botolph Neighborhood Association (SBNA)  
Robert Wright, Symphony United Neighbors (SUN)

**Ex-Officio Attendees:**

Lorraine Fowlkes, Office of Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner

**City of Boston Attendees:**

David Carlson, BRA  
Ellen Lipsey, Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC)  
Inés Palmarin, BRA  
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

**Church Team Attendees:**

Ann Byer, Elkus-Manfredi Architects  
Barbara Burley, The First Church of Christ, Scientist  
Bob Herlinger, The First Church of Christ, Scientist  
Debbi Lawrence, The First Church of Christ, Scientist  
Mahmood Malihi, Leggat McCall Properties  
Bob Ryan, ML Strategies  
Jim Van Sickle, Elkus-Manfredi Architects

**Members of the Public:**

Susan Ashbrook, Berklee Task Force and NABB  
Ed Foley, Local #17 Sheet Metal Workers  
Sarah Kelly, Boston Preservation Alliance  
Shirley Kressel, NABB

Stephanie Mason, Church Member  
Melinda Munson, SBNA  
Barbara Simons, Berklee Task Force and SUN  
Lucille Taitt, Church Member  
Bill Whitney, Berklee College of Music

### **Meeting Summary**

On Thursday, February 25, 2010, the thirteenth working session of the Christian Science Plaza Revitalization Project Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was called to order at approximately 6:05 p.m. in the Christian Science Publishing House Building by Inés Palmarin, BRA Senior Planner.

Inés then turned the meeting over to Ellen Lipsey, Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC), who provided an overview of the Landmarks Commission's role with respect to the Church's Revitalization Plan. Ellen also passed around a handout, which is available on the project website. The background on the Landmark Designation Process is as follows:

- Petition accepted by the BLC for further study and potential designation on January 23, 2007 at a public hearing. Petition includes the site and landscape and the building exteriors.
- Petition signatories are mostly Boston architects. The petition recognizes the property as a major American modernist landscape, a significant work of architects of national and regional importance, and as the world headquarters of the Christian Science religion.
- Landmark designation is the highest honor and offers the most protection that can be conferred on individual properties in Boston. To qualify a property must have historic and/or architectural significance to the City of Boston and to the state, the New England Region or the nation. When a resource is designated, the Boston Landmarks Commission reviews and must approve proposed changes.
- The vehicle for designation is a Study Report. The Study Report includes a physical description of the property, history and significance, planning considerations, recommendations, and specific design guidelines tailored to each Landmark along with additional information.
- The Study Report will be made available to the petitioners, property owner, any other interested parties, and the public 21 days before a formal BLC hearing. The hearing is held to present the results of the Study Report and take testimony and comments regarding designation.
- Design guidelines recognize that change is going to occur. The guidelines are developed from the history and significance of a given resource to direct change appropriately. Guidelines pertain to rehabilitation, potential demolition, potential new construction, landscape and site treatments, signage, lighting and so forth. Changes to interiors of the buildings will not be reviewed.

- BLC staff offered to meet with the CAC during the 21-day period prior to the BLC public hearing to answer preliminary questions about the Study Report prior to the formal hearing. There is also an established process to work with a property owner, CAC, BRA, and others to consider suggested changes to the Study Report, particularly to the design guidelines, based on hearing testimony.
- A vote on designation would include proposed amendments to the Study Report. After the BLC votes to designate a Landmark, the vote must be confirmed by the Mayor and by the City Council.
- Examples of Boston Landmarks Commission Study Reports can be found online at [www.cityofboston.gov/environment](http://www.cityofboston.gov/environment). (On the home page scroll down to Reports & Publications.) The Filene's Study Report and the Mission Church Complex Study Report each address a collection of buildings. The amended guidelines in those reports include input from the property owners, the BRA, and the Mission Church CAC (for that property).

Questions and comments in response to Ellen's presentation from the CAC are summarized below:

- Sybil CooperKing, Co-Chair and NABB, asked why the CAC should continue to meet while the Study Report was being prepared, since the report will result in a set of design guidelines. Inés responded indicating that both processes will run parallel and that the planning work done by the CAC will inform the Study Report. She added that the CAC will also be covering topics not addressed by the Study Report.
- Kelly Brilliant, Fenway Alliance, asked if the goal of the BLC is to protect good architecture and design. Ellen replied that this is true and noted that the BLC is very glad to be working with the Church and the CAC.
- In response to a follow-up question from Sybil CooperKing regarding how the BLC process will affect the paths likely to be created as part of the Church's Revitalization Plan, Ellen replied that the ongoing work by the CAC can be reviewed informally by BLC staff during the preparation of the Study Report.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association, asked if the process will result in the BLC coming up with a "wish list" of what they would like to see preserved. Ellen replied that the regulatory process is a reactive, rather than proactive one, initiated in response to an application for design review for proposed changes. The BLC's expectations will become clear through the design guidelines.

Public Questions:

- In response to questions from Shirley Kressel, NABB, Ellen replied that every Study Report contains a section on demolition. The BLC understands that the best way to protect buildings is to utilize them – and the Commission understands that uses often change over time and changes to use can necessitate design changes. The Study Report will look closely at the original intent of the architecture and the history of the site. If designated as a Landmark, the designation will be recorded at the Suffolk Registry of Deeds.

Next, the Church Team, led by Barbara Burley and Bob Herlinger, provided an overview of the team's progress on the Belvidere/Dalton Street site in a PowerPoint Presentation, available on

the BRA's project website. Howard Elkus, Elkus-Manfredi Architects, also walked the group through a model of the site.

Questions and comments to the Church Team's presentation are summarized below:

- Joanne McKenna, Fenway CDC, asked if the proposed "green space" between the two buildings is meant to serve as an active or connective space. Howard indicated that this section would likely be a passive space, though it could be designed so as to be visually accessible.
- George Thrush, Co-Chair and BSA, commented that small parks are a smart way to connect to an existing neighborhood's character and also mitigate density.
- In response to a question from Sybil CooperKing, Bob Herlinger replied that the project team is reviewing the potential loss of 15 residential parking spaces.
- Tom Aucella, Belvedere Condo Association, expressed that his main concern as a resident in the area is traffic.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen commented that she viewed development at this site as an opportunity to improve the existing condition of the area.
- Mark Cataudella, BSO, commented that the pedestrian realm improvements should be reviewed very carefully.
- Joanne McKenna commented that she is still unsure if this is the appropriate level of density for the site.
- Christian Coffin, Hilton Hotel Boston Back Bay, stated that he is looking forward to seeing the area upgraded.
- Bill Richardson, FCA, commented that he would like to see all of the pedestrian crossings designed at a wider scale than they are presently shown.
- In a follow-up question, Bill Richardson asked to know what zoning controls allowed for the construction of the Hilton Hotel.
- Ryan Higginson, Resident of the South End, noted that he likes that the proposed building would add something to the City's skyline. He added that the service and loading areas still need to be further reviewed at the ground level.
- Vanessa Calderon-Rosado, IBA, agreed that this configuration is better than the previous one for the site, but noted that overall, it still feels very tight.
- Kelly Brilliant said she was very pleased so far with the Belvidere/Dalton plans.
- Craig Nicholson, APA – Massachusetts Chapter, stated that he thinks the proposed development ties well with the neighborhood
- Sybil CooperKing expressed her hope that this building will become an iconic one for the City, and a stunning addition to the skyline. She added that she is still concerned about the pedestrian experience, particularly with respect to the loading area. In addition, she mentioned that she is concerned about wind levels.
- George Thrush stated that the improvements to this site will be very important and will change the pedestrian experience along Belvidere Street.

At the end of the meeting, Inés reviewed a list of topics that remain to be covered by the CAC, which include: further review of the Huntington Avenue site, sustainability, traffic, environmental conditions, and then finally the creation of the Revitalization Plan document. The CAC will continue to meet on a monthly basis until the process is complete.

The meeting was then adjourned at 8:10 p.m.