

MINUTES  
BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION

The meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was held on Tuesday, June 1, 2021, 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, and beginning at 5:00 p.m. Members in attendance were Deneen Crosby, Linda Eastley, Jonathan Evans, David Hacin, Kathy Kottaridis, Anne-Marie Lubeanu, Andrea Leers, Mimi Love, David Manfredi, William Rawn, Kirk Sykes. Absent were Eric Höweler and Mikyoung Kim. Elizabeth Stifel, Executive Director of the Commission, was present. Representatives of the BSA attended. Matt Martin and Natalie Punzak 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 May 22, 2021, in the BOSTON HERALD.

The first item was the approval of the May 4, 2021 Monthly Meeting Minutes, and the Design Committee Minutes from meetings on May 11, 18, and 25, 2021. A motion was made, seconded, and it was duly

**VOTED: To approve the May 4, 11, 18, and 25, 2021 BCDC Meeting Minutes.**

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Votes were passed for signature. The next item was a report from the Review Committee on the Harvard Enterprise Research Campus project. This approximately 900,000 SF master plan includes residential, office/lab, hotel conference center, and retail/restaurant and two acres of public open space. Henning Larsen and Studio Gang with SCAPE are the master planners. Given the scale and significance of the project, review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Harvard Enterprise Research Campus project in the Allston neighborhood.**

The next Review Committee report was for the Parcels O & P project. Located in the Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park, the project includes the construction of a new 219,000 SF life sciences/research and development building and the reuse of an existing 9,000 SF building to serve as amenity space. Review is recommended, as the project exceeds the 100,000 SF threshold for review. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed Parcels O & P project in the South Boston Waterfront neighborhood.**

The third report from review committee was for the 76 Ashford Street project. The project proposes the redevelopment of a single-story industrial building into a 220,895 SF, 16-story, 254 unit residential building. The site is bounded by a rail right of way to the north, a residential

neighborhood to the west and the Boston University Track and Tennis center to the east. The project exceeds the threshold for review, and review is recommended. It was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the Commission review the schematic design for the proposed 76 Ashford Street project in the Allston neighborhood.**

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The Commission moved into Votes of Recommendation for projects from Design Committee. The first and only presentation from Design Committee was for **Brigham and Women's Faulkner Hospital IMP and Projects**.

Alex Krieger, NBBJ: The project is an expansion of inpatient facilities and parking for patients and visitors. The inpatient addition is a 98,000 SF addition to the hospital. The number of parking spaces required has been established through the community process. There will be a solar array atop the garage, but it will not be visible and we have worked to reduce the presence/visibility of the garage as much as possible through the design review process.

William Rawn: What are the lower two floors of this inpatient addition like and how will it contribute to a sense of accessibility?

Alex Krieger: These are procedure floors, including imaging/MRI, and therefore cannot have the same level of transparency. We are focused on screening with landscaping and patterned materials.

Deneen Crosby: If you have an opportunity to establish the planting buffer between the garage and the neighborhood sooner into your construction phasing, pursue that.

Kirk Sykes: It would be nice to bring more transparency to the ground floor where possible with materials.

Frank O'Brien, Friends of the Allendale Coalition: We are supportive of this project and have worked with the team on screening. In the context of the Allendale Corridor and hospital expansion, we have asked the BPDA for further planning study beyond this site itself.

(Hearing no further comments, a motion was made), it was moved, seconded, and

**VOTED: That the BCDC recommend approval for Brigham and Women's Faulkner Hospital IMP and Projects in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.**

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The Commission moved to project presentations, the first being for the **Harvard Enterprise Research Campus Master Plan** in Allston. Kirk Sykes, William Rawn, Mimi Love, and Andrea Leers were recused.

Elizabeth Stifel offered a brief introduction of the process to-date: Review has focused on the change in configuration of the PDA and its relationship to the surrounding neighborhood, especially as this relates to the openness and connectedness of the public realm. We have yet to discuss the architecture beyond the massive-level.

Jessica Hughes, Tishman Speyer: Team is leading this phase development within the existing Harvard IMP. This is for Phase A, which includes 7 acres of the PDA site. Also included Phase B for reference, which will complete the 14-acre development. Not presenting any architecture. Henning Larsen, Studio Gang, SCAPE, Utile. The Enterprise Research Campus (ERC) is located south of the Harvard IMP between Western Ave and Cambridge St. Building footprints are largely speculative and meant to express layout.

Jeanne Gang, Studio Gang: Since initial brief in 2018, we're reconfigured the layout to improve the urban space. Adjusted program placement to address the micro climate. The ERC Center will be integrated with the greenway with this wider, more straightened design concept. The Cattle Drive promenade has been revised with expanded sidewalks. The sense of a gride is strengthened in this iteration. The master plan incorporates a diverse scale of streets and spaces, it's nature centric, will offer year round comfort, and model sustainability. Efficient building clusters combine services and programs. We've Considered connection to future Phase B with this plan, and have proposed massing volumes for each program element.

David Hacin: This looks like a really significant improvement from the early phase one proposal. In the larger greenway plan, it looks like there have been some shifts in parcels closest to the river and I'm curious about how these buildings fit into phasing.

David Manfredi: The drive to the river and connection to the park feel so much more clear and direct in this plan. As we go forward, it would be helpful to see the framework plan in a simple massing model. I want to understand the porosity and view corridors throughout the master plan.

Deneen Crosby: In the short term, porosity on Western Ave is very important and I can see the open space in this proposal functioning well. At some point in the future, there will be ped/bike crossing from Allston Landing South. Cattle Drive is the important corridor to West Station and Comm Ave. But it rises in elevation to get to the station. East Drive is level. So what are the differences in these streets and how are they reflected in the plan? Don't under estimate East Drive as part of the future. When do various pieces and phases of this plan happen?

Anne-Marie Lubenau: It would be nice to have more information on phasing and how this development will operate at each phase given the surrounding context. I appreciate the attention to the public realm at the ground level. I'm curious about how this will work at three dimensions

Linda Eastley: The green ribbon is clever and more sophisticated than the previous scheme. At the corner of Western Ave and East Dr, what are the clues that will direct people to the open space connections?

David Hacin: What is the vision and transition from this campus to the more traditional Harvard Business School campus on the other side of Western Avenue? Is it gradual and interconnected or more of a hard break?

Anne-Marie Lubenau: How does the architecture address the privacy/public-private nature of the campus and what elements distinguish this at a district scale?

Linda Eastley: It's incredibly helpful to hear the philosophy and principles that inform this strategy, especially so early.

Priscilla Anderson, resident: This neighborhood is connected by infrastructure and I appreciate the framework approach to the campus master plan. Wondering about how the plan for the North Allston Stom Drain project fits into this.

Christine Varriale, resident & HATF: Echo commission's comments and concerns about the North Allston Stom Drain project. Residents have put together a survey and study about priorities for

Western Ave as redevelopment continues. Access to the river is the number priority and I'd like to see more of the neighborhood's vision included in this development plan.

The project will continue in design committee.

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The next project presentation was for **Parcels O & P project** in the South Boston Waterfront neighborhood. Andrea Leers, William Rawn, and Mimi Love returned. Kirk Sykes and David Manfredi were recused.

Elizabeth Stifel offered a brief introduction of the process to-date: Internal review has focused on public realm connections and the strategy of the architecture as it relates to the existing building. We are also hoping to see site design and sustainable strategies implemented with the surface parking lot.

Kristen O'Gorman, SGA: Parcel O is 60% leased to the future home of Ginko Bioworks. Parcel P will be an adaptive reuse project for amenity space. Preservation of working waterway and resiliency were priorities and key design constraint. We will also be maintaining the existing parking lot and loading off Au Bon Pain Way. We'll be adding 55 trees to the site and envision the ground floor to be a porch with opportunities for public art and programming. There is a high level of transparency at this site and the materials and textures take inspiration from the Conely Terminal and the Innovation and Design Building.

Andrea Leers: I find the reinterpretation of the industrial fabric to be quite convincing. That said, when I realized that parking is such a substantial part of the site, I wondered why you didn't redistribute some of the mass to these other portions of the site. The contrast between the new and existing one-story structure is dramatic. Why not two buildings that can be in dialogue?

Linda Eastley: I would like to learn more about the relationship between these two parcels. How does the landscape and public realm connect the new and old buildings? What are the public amenities? And I'd like to learn more about the porch and its relationship to the sidewalk, as well as how pedestrians and vehicles circulate along ABP way.

Mimi Love: I'm troubled by the contrast in scale and style of these buildings. What are the elements that can architecturally unify these two buildings?

David Hacin: Would like to hear from BPDA what the larger zoning implications are for the district--will we see more buildings at this scale, in which case the single story might be nice relief? Could the roof be interesting, or more open? Want to understand what the district will be in 10 years. Need more than two buildings for a campus--what is the larger campus that these sites plug into?

Jonathan Evans: A model and street level views would help us better understand this project. Concerned with mechanical penthouse as a massing object, and with its visibility from afar.

Kathy Kottaridis: Echo notions about this as a "campus." Feels that the low rise building wants to be more creative and expansive.

Andrea Leers: I don't think the parking lot has been resolved. This to me reads like a strong proposal for one building. I find it curious that the building to the left and the parking lot are underdeveloped.

The project will continue in design committee.

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Kirk Sykes and David Manfredi returned. The **76 Ashford Street** project was the next presentation.

Matt Martin, BPDA Urban Design gave a brief overview: This project is at the edge of two zoning districts. It proposes a building much larger than what is allowed by zoning but more than half of site is dedicated to MassDOT future connection. Narrow lot and questions about fenestration along property line.

Dartagnan Brown, Embarc: This proposal ties in with the future I-90 design, and half of the site is designated for future transportation connects and public access to the proposed West Station. Building will have two fronts because of its relationship to future West Station, BU, and the neighborhood. Interim park will be built as we await West Station development. Active ground floor. Amenity space throughout the building. There is a grade change from Ashford St to West Station that the project will traverse.

David Hacin: We're increasingly seeing tall projects abutting single-family homes in this neighborhood. What is the vision for the Malvern Street corridor after West Station? There are a lot of nice things about this project, and I wish the park were a permanent feature.

Deneen Crosby: It would be helpful to have street views showing both single family homes and this project, as the streets around Ashford are at a different scale. I would like to understand the grade change and any retaining walls that will be required. How is maintenance and circulation working and does it affect neighborhood streets?

William Rawn: I'm concerned about the zero lot line condition. Malvern Street is key to West Station, and how will this building affect access to the station?

David Manfredi: It would be helpful to see this project from broader scale planning contexts, too. I recognize that West Station will support added density, but it feels like a residential neighborhood is sandwiched between this area and the Allston Yards redevelopment. This will be legible to/from Downtown and Kendall Square—what happens east-west? What if West Station is not developed?

Linda Eastley: The first subcommittee meeting should feature plans for future development of this area and planning context from BPDA staff. And about how this project has been informed by the neighborhood, IAG, and relationship to Boston University.

Andrea Leers: The concerns that have been raised here are not architectural, but with what this proposal has to do with a broader vision for this area. How are you thinking about this in the mid-range future as surrounding development is ongoing or delayed? This is a narrow wall building between BU and a fine grain residential neighborhood.

Priscilla Anderson, IAG: We would be happy to communicate with the Commission. The existing surrounding neighborhood is primarily investor-owned and many of these buildings are being sold and redeveloped as larger buildings. The neighborhood is already transforming and becoming taller. In considering this tall building, we want to influence the percentage of affordability housing, which is the biggest challenge in the neighborhood today, and to be a showcase of energy efficiency and sustainability. This will be a flagship building. We'd love to talk more about what we think.

The project will continue in committee.

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There being no further items for discussion, a motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:32 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Boston Civic Design Commission was scheduled for June 8, 2021. The recording of the June 1, 2021 Boston Civic Design Commission meeting was digitized and is available at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.