

## MINUTES

**DESIGN COMMITTEE OF THE BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION**

November 28, 2023

**Meeting A**

5:00pm, Held virtually via Zoom

Project: **Mildred Hailey Master Plan & Bldg.2 & Bldg. 3**

Present: Commissioner Linda Eastley, Commissioner Anne-Marie Lubenau, Commissioner Mikyoung Kim, and Commissioner Catherine Morris

DISCUSSION: The design team focused on open space at the front of the site and updates on building 2 and 3 of the master plan. Commissioners shared that the congregation space (plaza) along the main street needs a more holistic front. They also asked for simplification of the geometry of the path systems; and details like the walkways and crosswalk don't line up and it creates a lot of hard lines that don't blend well. There were concerns that the rooms created in the open space do not give an internal or protected feeling.

Commissioners asked the team to use architectural detail to guide folks into these spaces, and more clarity on what would be public versus private spaces. In addition, what are the amenities for the residents of the building? For buildings, commissioners wanted more harmony between the buildings presented in the elevations. They were concerned that Building 2 is not cohesive with the existing neighborhood fabric or Building 3. They appreciated the changes made to the building brow and thought it could be brought in even further, especially along Bickford Street. Overall, commissioners would like the design team to continue working with BPDA staff.

There were no public comments.

**The Project will continue in full committee.**

6:30pm, Held virtually via Zoom

Project: **80 - 100 Smith Street**

Present: Commissioner Linda Eastley, Commissioner Anne-Marie Lubenau, Commissioner Mikyoung Kim, and Commissioner Catherine Morris

DISCUSSION:

The project team gave an overview of what has been seen in design committee thus far and focused on responding to previous questions from Commissioners about how the

buildings work together as a composition and how the building entrances are experienced.

Commissioners asked if the cornerstone building could have multi-purpose ground floor use to engage more organically with the community and not stand alone. There were no public comments.

**The Project will continue in design committee.**

## **Meeting B**

5:00 pm, Held virtually via Zoom

Project: **500 Huntington, Mission Hill**

Present: Commissioner Mimi Love, Commissioner William Rawn, Commissioner Laura Solano, and Commissioner David Manfredi

### **DISCUSSION:**

The project team's presentation focused on their massing analysis and their intentions to develop a publicly accessible open space with a unique identity. The presentation was met with a desire from the Commissioners for a model to better understand the building in context. [DM] The team received positive feedback regarding their open space and edge conditions but met with concern regarding the size and character of the passageway between the buildings. It was noted that the shifting massing may be exacerbating the feeling of narrowness in the passageway. [DM] Further comments focused on the alignment of the passageway with Northeastern University's West Campus across Parker Street and Museum Road across Huntington Avenue. There was discussion regarding the hardscape as well as the character and locations of the planting. Commissioners encouraged the planting to be more varied and purposeful in reinforcing the passageways' physical and visual connection. Additional comments regarding the path suggested the team create certain pullback at lower levels to better align with the Northeastern West Campus passage. They were also tasked to improve the building's interaction with the ground plane, retail identity and character, and engagement with pedestrians. Additionally, the Commissioners suggested breaking the pure lawn landscape at the corner to create a more significant buffer from the city through additional trees. [LS] Final comments noted the casualness in the massing and entrusted the team to improve the path connection with minimal changes to the floor plate. [ML]

There was no public comment.

**The Project will continue in design committee.**

5:45 pm, Held virtually via Zoom

Project: **1033 – 1055 Washington St., South End**

Present: Commissioner Mimi Love, Commissioner William Rawn, and Commissioner Laura Solano

#### DISCUSSION:

The Project team used a digital presentation to outline their approach and project updates. The meeting focused on the façade material's response to the neighborhood, strategies to activate Washington St further, and a call to flesh out the details of the proposed sky bridge [ML]. The Commissioners specifically commented on how the space can continue to draw in pedestrians through the corridor between the buildings. The conversation also entailed the importance of the open space to simultaneously strengthen east and west connections and provide an additional social realm for the neighborhood. Several commissioners expressed concern for the lack of development in the landscape, not only on the portion of the site currently owned by the BPDA and to be incorporated later into the design, but also on the passageway and its edges through the site. The last piece of feedback was to densify the trees along Washington if possible. [LS]

There were three public comments.

The first was by Stephen Tisdale, a member of the Board of Trustees for The Lucas. He appreciated the willingness of the team to input public feedback but had negative feedback regarding the change to red brick as the façade material for the south building preferring that the façade materiality creates a great juxtaposition with the Lucas and provides additional material interest to the neighborhood.

The second public comment was from Aaryn Manning, of Project Place at the corner of Washington and East Berkeley. She was enthusiastic about the project and emphasized the public's gratitude for the open space.

The third public comment was by David Goldman, who commented that he would like to see the buildings speak together more. He also suggested that the greener the open space becomes, the better.

#### STIPULATIONS:

The Commissioners added a stipulation for the project to move forward. [LS] The landscape shall be rigorously examined, and more attention will be placed on the corridor. [ML] The project team will also address the comments regarding the bridge and activate Washington St. through awnings and signage.

Seth Riseman, Deputy Director of Design Review at the BPDA, noted that a separate process for the design of the open space on the BPDA parcel would be undertaken by the

proponent with the community and that that design, along with any resultant changes to the project's open space, would be brought before the committee in the future.

**The Project will return to the full Commission.**

6:30 pm, Held virtually via Zoom

Project: **1400 Boylston Street, Fenway**

Present: Commissioner Mimi Love, Commissioner William Rawn, and Commissioner Laura Solano

DISCUSSION:

The Project team used a digital presentation to outline their approach and project updates. The team was responsive to comments from the previous Design Committee meeting. The Commissioners were particularly impressed by the massing and articulation changes to regularize the building and mechanical penthouse, making the project feel much more coherent and cohesive [ML] The team was asked to continue refining the facade's grid system, as the horizontals felt chunky in relation to its verticals, and to use curved glass at the curved corners if possible. The team received praise regarding the refinements to the landscape including the incorporation of topography [LS]. The discussion concluded with a comment regarding the uniformity of the elevation and suggested a setback at the upper few stories of the central recessed bay to prevent the façade from being too continuous and imposing [WR].

There was no public comment.

STIPULATION:

The team should explore tweaks to alleviate the overall length of the façade.

Seth Riseman, Deputy Director of Design Review at the BPDA, noted that the design for the Civic Pavilion was a placeholder and that a separate process for the design of the Pavilion would be undertaken when the use was defined and that that design, along with any resultant changes to the project's open space, would be brought before the committee in the future.

**The Project will return to the full Commission.**