

FINAL MINUTES

Joint CRA Board and Cambridge Planning Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 12, 2019, 7:30pm.
City Hall Annex – Second Floor,
344 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Call

At 7:46pm, Theodore Cohen, Chair of the Planning Board called the Joint Planning Board meeting to order with the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority. At 7:47pm, CRA Vice-Chair, Margaret Drury called the CRA Special Meeting to order to discuss the 325 Main Street building design. CRA Board members present included Treasurer, Christopher Bator, Assistant Treasurer Conrad Crawford, and Assistant Secretary Barry Zevin. CRA Chair Kathleen Born was unable to attend. Thomas Evans, the CRA Executive Director, Alex Levering, Project Manager, Ellen Shore, Office Director and Chuck Redmon, the CRA's Design Consultant were also in attendance.

Mr. Cohen explained the Planning Board has some public business to attend to. Khalil Mogassabi from the Community Development Department explained the Housing Committee had a public hearing regarding the affordable housing overlay that was well attended, which will be continued on March 20th. On April 2nd the Ordinance Committee will have a public hearing on accessory apartments. On April 3rd the Ordinance Committee will have a public hearing on the CambridgeSide proposed proposition for PUD-8. The Planning Board will have a hearing on March 19th on the CambridgeSide PUD-8 zoning petition proposal, and on March 26th the Planning Board will have a hearing on accessory apartments. Mr. Mogassabi noted that today, the Planning Board has a continued hearing for 325 Main Street Design Review, and a BZA case on 43 Brookford Street.

The Planning Board then voted to adopt the December 4th meeting transcript. Mr. Cohen reminded the Planning Board members that the Town Gown manuscript was transferred to the board members, and that they are asked to make comments on the document and return them to CDD staff.

Mr. Cohen recognized 325 Main Street Design Review as the next agenda item. Mr. Cohen introduced himself as Vice-Chair of the Planning Board and noted that he did not attend the last session of design review on 325 Main Street. He introduced the rest of the Planning Board members. Mr. Cohen asked Jeff Roberts, Zoning and Development Director of the Cambridge Community Development Department to give a brief explanation of the Planning Board's design review approval process. Mr. Roberts explained this review is case number 315, part of the Infill Development Concept Plan (IDCP), which means it is a like a PUD development in the MXD that includes two new residential and two new commercial buildings. This year an IDCP major amendment was approved to shift commercial gross floor area from Binney Street to Main Street in the MXD District. The overall height and massing and other aspects of the building were approved as part of the IDCP amendment. As with PUD projects the concept plan he explained, is subject to further design review by the Planning Board, and the approval process has been undertaken jointly by the CRA, which has its own approval and jurisdiction, and the Planning Board. Mr. Roberts explained this meeting is a design review, which means the special permit has already been granted, and the goal of the meeting is for the Planning Board to approve a schematic design subject to continuing review by staff as it goes through design development, is monitored through the construction process, and subject to oversight by the CRA. Mr. Roberts explained two weeks ago the Planning Board saw a presentation on 325 Main Street, and a number of questions came up in the joint meeting. Staff provided materials identifying issues that remained to be

explored, which ranged from broader conceptual issues to fine grain design issues that typically staff review in the continued review process. The meeting was continued to give the proponent a chance to address some of the questions that were raised. The action is for the Planning Board to approve a schematic design.

Tom Evans, noted the CRA has a separate and slightly different review process than the Planning Board, which includes a CRA board member led Design Review Sub-committee, which Planning Board members participate in. The CRA also has additional check-ins in the process after schematic design approval, where staff have an opportunity to weigh in on Design and Construction Documents to make sure the design is going in the right direction. When the CRA reviewed 145 Broadway Design Documents, the CRA also brought CDD staff to those meetings. The CRA process is a bit more iterative through the schematic to construction documents approval processes, as outlined in the CRA's Development Agreement.

Mr. Cohen invited the proponent to begin their presentation.

Meeting Presentation by Boston Properties (BxP) and Architect Pickard Chilton

Melissa Schrock, Vice President of Development at BxP began the presentation. Ms. Schrock reviewed the agenda on what BxP plans to present at the meeting. She noted after the first hearing two weeks ago, that BxP, Planning Board, and CRA staff discussed agenda items for the meeting. She noted many design improvements have been made, but that some of the design improvements may be the object of ongoing design review at the staff level. Design topics to be discussed include, the plaza to terrace social stair, terrace to roof garden cascading stair, the first and second level retail storefronts to make them read similarly, public entrance for 325 and 355 Main Street interface, retail/building signage, and building façade design. Ms. Schrock noted there would be slides that show a differentiation of the façade. Two later items can then be discussed by BxP and other consultants regarding bike parking and access and energy performance and LEED sustainability. Ms. Schrock also introduced additional consultants working on the 325 Main Street project who would be available to answer sustainability questions, including energy modeling, building envelop, mechanical engineer, and sustainability consultants.

Ms. Schrock then clarified commitments made as part of the project that were touched upon in the last meeting. She explained the level-4 Main Street terrace will be delivered as part of the base-building. Other tenant optional terraces will be designed with doors and guard rails consistent with overall façade design. The Roof Garden event policy she noted will be reviewed with the CRA, and BxP will make best efforts to ensure retail at ground level has two entrances from Main Street and two entrances from Kendall Plaza. Ms. Schrock then handed it off to Anthony Markese, Architect from Pickard Chilton to begin his part of the presentation.

Mr. Markese noted their work has been to develop more accurate details as it relates to the base of the building to further discuss the stairs, storefront and entrance of the building. He explained their team started working with curtain wall contractors early on, so further details can be provided to the boards regarding façade design. He also noted some façade changes will be shown later on in the presentation, and that all of those changes have been confirmed with the curtain wall contractors to ensure they are buildable.

Mr. Markese explained the organization of his presentation. Each topic he noted shows an image to give a sense of the new design, then shows a rendering, and then a standalone close-up image. Mr. Markese then explained the concept of a plinth on the base of the building that transfers to the second level. The ground floor he noted anchors to the Earth with stone and terracotta, and then as you move up the building it gets lighter and more transparent. He reviewed the plan of the social stair, showing how the area between the building and the MBTA headhouse has been made wider. He showed a view of the social stair. He noted it is made of stone, and creates steps you can walk down but also areas where people can pause and sit. The stair design intent he noted is to have a design that weaves together in a graceful cadence. He explained a rendering that shows the stair and the

elevator that will bring you from the lower-level MBTA tracks to Main Street, and planters at the top of the terrace to allow vegetation to hang down. Concert pavers he noted will meet the stone base of the floor and the wall along the stairs will be terracotta. Mr. Markese explained the rail varies at different points on the terrace so sometimes you can step up to the edge and other times it will be a planting area, and the second story plinth will have a granite cap. Mr. Markese explained the terrace planters will be metal and be made of lighter materials that will allow for the most amount of planting space and match the railing. Pavers he noted will be in 3:1 proportion. He reviewed the headhouse roof, showing the railings and planter areas. Mr. Markese explained the MBTA headhouse glass will be 7.5ft wide by up to 13ft tall, so it will be very transparent and open. He then noted the detailing of the terrace to roof garden stair. He explained the tread and riser will be stone with painted steel or formed aluminum material on the fascia. Simple railings he explained will give maximum transparency but minimize maintenance, and that at the terrace and social stair, the best solution is a clean steel picket rail. The soffit of the monumental stair he noted will reflect the color of the building spandrel. He explained the seating has been removed from the stair perches as there are plenty of seating options on the second-level, and for code compliance you would need to push the balcony railing up. Mr. Markese also explained the frit pattern on the façade to show the transition up to the garden. Both floors above the terrace he noted will have the same layout and more transparent glass style. He noted a V column will support the middle perch of the terrace stairs. Mr. Markese also reviewed the look of the stair in all glass as another possibility, but recognized there would be issues of maintenance but less so because it's not up against the planter.

Mr. Markese then discussed the storefront façade. He showed the intent of transparency and how retail at night the space becomes an internal lantern to activate the street, while in the day time you get a sense of transparency and openness. He reviewed an image to show the relationship of lights between the two floors. He noted they put entryway doors on the ground floor area and created a zone on the retail facades for signage and louvers for mechanical. The terraces are intended, he explained, to work with the building so rail details will continue to be worked on. Mr. Markese explained the potential entrance locations on Main Street and the plaza and that they grouped the elevator and public bathrooms to be located in the north part of the ground floor retail with access through a common corridor. Mr. Markese reviewed the planting overview of the terrace, stair and headhouse area, and noted operable overhead doors were planned on the second-floor terrace.

Mr. Markese discussed the design modifications made on the gasket connection between 325 Main and 355 Main Street, and noted Davis Brody, the previous 355 Main Street architect, left them with a difficult problem. He explained they rethought the design of the soffit, making it more simplified, plumb, level, and similar to the condition as it is now. The new design he explained allows the soffit to have a higher vertical area, and the aperture language only applies to the vertical face, and the canopy line will be continued. The angled wall, he explained, and separation between the Google Connector and Google's space now meets at one connection. There will be an expansion joint he noted between some elements of the building, which they plan to minimize as much as possible and setback in a reveal. The curtain wall contractors he stated are now figuring out the details of how the joint will work. Level 4 of 325 Main Street he noted will have an occupied terrace with plantings. Mr. Markese also explained they plan to blend the east side of 355 Main Street as it connects to the gasket with a modeled curtain wall to mimic the spacing of the current 355 Main Street story-levels. The canopy of the gasket entrance he noted is still a question that is being investigated, as it does not relate to the soffit on the west side.

Mr. Markese showed a longitudinal view of the inside of the Google Connector, and explained how the top of the connector roof forms a V to connect to the soffits on the north and south side of the space. He then showed a modular section of 355 Main Street, showing how the two façade treatments blend together, with the material of 325 Main Street and the logic of 355 Main Street. Mr. Markese then showed zones of signage along Main Street and on the terrace area. He noted on the top aperture on the east side of the building Google might ask for a sign.

Mr. Markese then reviewed previous hearing questions as they related to the façade, such as variation in texture, shading, differentiation between the building sections and mitigation of glare. The system they have now he

explained allows them to add a fin element in the break between the window units. He reviewed a rendering that shows how the fins adds differentiation between the upper building, middle building and lower building area. Adding additions between the spandrel he noted helps to add more solidity to the building, noting it knits the columns and vertical elements of the building together. Mr. Markese reviewed the connection between the top and middle block in a close-up perspective. He explained they are achieving the fin design by adding an I-beam joint that can slide in between the two curtain wall sections at a mullion. These fins will help with shading and help with glare.

Mr. Markese reviewed the need to balance the performance of glass for all four seasons in Boston, letting some heat-gain in but not too much. Mr. Markese reviewed a shadow box illustration of 1ft x 3ft samples illustrating what happens as you spin the shadow box relative to sunlight. In certain lights he noted, you get a lot of shadow, and in others less shadow but more reflectivity. Because of the nature of the material being use for the spandrel, he explained, the character of the design will change a lot. Mr. Markese noted the building will not read as dark as MIT's SOMa building 4 on Main Street, as that building has a dark bronze tint on the windows. 325 Main Street he explained is more akin to 145 Broadway for glass and metal materials. 145 Broadway has a reflective silver coating, so it reads bluer he noted, while 325 Main Street will be more transparent as the glass reflectance is lower. He showed as building example from Yale's campus in New Haven that has a context of a brick building with has a similar glass color. He noted that he believes the boards will be surprised at how light the building will actually turn out.

Mr. Cohen asked for questions/comments from board members.

Mary Flynn, member of the Planning board noted she liked the progress and the fins of the facade. She noted she likes the color more in this presentation. She noted she approves of the second set of stairs to the darker aluminum color, as it gives the stairs more weight and prominence. For a railing, she noted she would prefer the pickets. Ms. Flynn also noted she likes the new connection design between the two buildings.

Conrad Crawford, CRA Board member agreed that a number of points raised in the last meeting have been refined in the presentation. Mr. Crawford noted he appreciates Mr. Markese's attention to the attachment of the building to the Earth, and the attention to the character and site of the building. He reiterated the importance of plants, trees, shrubs, grasses, and mosses as necessary softer components to balance the hard building textures of the granite, terracotta, glass and metal. He noted that he wants to make sure the terraces and buildings are being designed to support the planting beds and structures. Mr. Crawford noted that at the Urban Masterplan Task Force meetings, they discuss the importance of seeing trees as communities and paying attention to the understory of trees to add dimension. Mr. Crawford asked Mr. Markese about the glare of the exterior of the building and if the added mullions would help deflect that? Mr. Markese confirmed the fins would help with glare.

Mr. Cohen asked about the stairs going from the plaza to the terrace. He noted he feels it will force people into a narrow pathway. Mr. Markese explained the width of the stair portion is 5 feet, but he mentioned they could make it wider. Mr. Cohen also expressed concern about the elevator inside the building, noting it is tucked away on the other side of the stair. He noted due to the elevator's location that they will need a massive sign to help guide the public. The elevator path he explained, has to be very obvious and clear. Mr. Markese reviewed how users would get to the ground floor elevator. Mr. Cohen noted that there still needs to be very clear signage. Mr. Markese explained the Design Review Committee asked for the elevator to be moved inside. Mr. Cohen noted that he understands the design progress, but reiterates the need for signage. Ms. Schrock noted they will include signs on the terrace level and the roof garden for the elevator. Mr. Markese showed a rendering of the building from the roof garden. Mr. Cohen asked if the fins will be on the back (north) façade of the building, as he noted his concern that you will see the building as a solid glass block. Mr. Cohen noted likes the addition of fins but also wonders why you don't have apertures on the north façade? Mr. Markese explained they are trying to design building apertures that correspond to usable terraces for the tenant. Mr. Cohen noted additional apertures could just be

decoration, but asked that they consider more design, especially where you can see the building from the garden and from Broadway. Mr. Cohen also expressed that an aperture could also be located on the facade facing 355 Main Street.

Mr. Bator noted he found much to like about the building, and that he appreciates the thoughtfulness of 325 Main Street's detail and connection to other buildings in the area. He asked to see an image of the building as it moves from the original glassier building style to the design with the dark lines (fins). He asked if the detail of the dark lines or fins was consistent with Mr. Markese's earlier statement of having the building grounded to the earth. He noted his intuitive reaction was that the new design was inconsistent with that idea, as the lines of the fins transform the building into being very busy and jarring to the original lighter, calmer, and airier design. The mullions he explained make it look like it is separating the building into more windows. Mr. Bator noted it was a bad analogy, but that he was reminded of the International Place One building in Boston. Mr. Markese noted he sees the fins more as a way to define the building surfaces, showing the top and bottom of the building as coplaner and the middle area as setback and tauter. Mr. Markese also explained the fins help connect the building to 355 Main Street.

Lou Bacci, Planning Board member, explained he is torn about the look of the fins, but that he thinks it could make the building pop. He noted the stairs going to the Roof Garden is opposing traffic, as the last stringer of the stairway cuts against the route of travel. He explained it needs another landing and a short run in the direction of travel. Mr. Bacci asked if the terrace will have enough sun to grow vegetation? Christian Lemon, from Lemon Brooke Architects responded saying it won't be full sun, but they are planning to plant bamboo. As you move farther away from the building Mr. Lemon noted, you get more sun so the plants will vary. The terrace, he explained will get better light than the south side of the roof garden. Mr. Bacci asked BxP if they can promise planting on the terrace? Ms. Schrock noted Google is very interested in utilizing the space. Mr. Bacci repeated that he wants BxP to commit to planting the terraces if Google does not occupy them. Ms. Schrock noted it will be Google's space, so they cannot fit out that area for them. Mr. Bacci clarified that he wants a commitment of greenery to help soften the building.

Mr. Zevin, CRA Board member noted the new building façade grid leaves him of two minds. He explained the original horizontal façade scheme had a logic to it, and that the new design as a more vertical building is different. The connection he noted from 355 to 325 Main Street is very horizontal, and he's curious if the grid being more vertical gets in the way of that? Mr. Zevin asked if they truly intended to run the new fin mullions in the sloping glass of the apertures? Mr. Markese noted the apertures will not have mullions. Mr. Zevin noted almost all of the other changes Mr. Markese has done is an improvement. Mr. Zevin explained that some of the moves are more unrelenting than he would have preferred. He noted the double glazing on the second floor could be interrupted once or twice with the original module, and it could interlock the second and third floors, he explained he did not know if that would be an improvement. Mr. Zevin stated the wall along the first stair could come up and replace the railing in some places. He asked about the corridor to the elevator on the first level, and if the hallway facing the retail could be glazed even if it is an egress way? Ms. Schrock noted that the hallway will be accessible from the outside at all times. Mr. Zevin noted the MBTA stairways are 7ft wide, and that that width would be sufficient for this hallway. Mr. Markese agreed it should be wider, and noted the south wall on the corridor could be glass, but that it might require sprinkler heads on both sides of the wall. Mr. Zevin stated the joint to the Davis Brody building improved. He explained the new building section on the corner of Clover is essentially an addition to the Davis Brody building. He noted he understands the design, but that it is fighting with that over the canopy, but that it works much better now. Regarding the new piece of curtain wall along the side of 355 Main, Mr. Zevin noted it does not feel wonderful yet. Mr. Markese noted they looked at another scenario that tried to stair step the facade, but that it did not look clean and made it overly complex, so they went with a straight line instead. Mr. Markese also stated it will be so far up along the building. Mr. Zevin agreed. Acknowledging the comments made about the blandness of the north façade, he explained he wondered if the building will be seen from the north other than the

roof garden? He also stated that he did not know if the apertures make sense in the shade. He noted he is all for more articulation, but that it is important it adds to building use. Mr. Zevin noted the perches on the staircases are very good. He also noted that the second stair's orientation east-west is design to make it visible to users on the ground floor. He also expressed his concern about the wedge underneath the first riser of the terrace stair. Mr. Markese noted the model currently has the planter almost to the outer edge, so you can sit on the second step of the plinth and everything beyond that is a planter.

Mr. Cohen invited Suzannah Bigolin, a CDD staff member to provide comments. Ms. Bigolin noted the presentation showed a number of building improvements. She explained the space around the headhouse improved and is much more welcoming and less tight. She noted she was pleased to see the commitment to two entrances on the ground floor retail space, and was happy the two-floor retail space was modified, but explained it still reads as one level. Ms. Bigolin noted the frit pattern on the terrace façade could be more prominent, and that the vegetation behind the cascading stair could be enhanced to screen the parking garage. Ms. Bigolin noted the terrace planting shown to be spilling over the edge and down the wall near the social stair will be important, because the wall is quite blank. She noted she was impressed with the transparency and reflectance qualities of the glass, and that the material is more transparent than most building's seen by the Planning Board. She also noted she mullion detail provides depth, but that she is slightly conflicted with it as well. She agrees with it at the lower level, but is unsure how it works with the middle and the top building sections. Overall, she noted the improvements were positive, and that most of the issues the Planning Board raised in earlier meetings was spoken about tonight. Mr. Markese commented that it is important to think of scale when combining the first and second floor retail design as one. The first floor he explained is about 16 feet in height, so to double the height of the retail will feel too large.

Ms. Drury from the CRA Board, noted the building design keeps getting better, and explained she liked the design of the cascading stairs, the fins and apertures. She explained she agrees with other comments that the social stair was a bit narrow. For the retail she noted she understands the terracotta band moved to the top of the second-floor level would feel high, but if something is not done, she feels the second-floor retail level will be too powerless. Ms. Drury asked if there was any way to make the retail levels feel more uniform without making bigger, taller windows? She noted she would take Mr. Markese's word for it that the building will not be too dark.

Hugh Russell from the Planning Board noted he saw enough progress in the building to make him feel comfortable to approve the building and allow the design to be refined by staff in design review. Mr. Russell noted MIT's Building 4 SOMa project on Main Street has a façade color transition to mimic the Battery March building in Boston. He suggested that the building fins could have a lighter color, with less black to help lighten of the overall mass. He also noted the elevator lobby on the ground level should have glass looking onto the retail area. It doesn't have to be 100% glass, but in places where people are moving it would be helpful. He noted retailers will want to use some of that wall for display. Mr. Russell also noted that finding the elevator lobby will be a challenge since it is under the trellis. He suggested a solution could be integrating the trellis sculpture with signage for the elevator and pioneer way. Mr. Russell also suggested adding a few reverse bay windows on the second-floor retail façade so you have some changes of plane, which are stopped at the upper spandrel. He explained the corners of the bays become display opportunities for retailers because they get a lot of light. Mr. Russell then reiterated that he feels BxP has made sufficient progress to be approved and allow them to move to the next stages of design.

Tom Sieniewicz thanked Mr. Markese for the stair detail and for the fins added on the building. He noted Hugh's suggestion about making the fins lighter as they move up the building was a good one. Mr. Sieniewicz noted the entrance was also much improved, and that he is excited about the MBTA roof garden, and hearing the willingness and cooperation of the T. He explained he does not like the smaller run of the stairs because they look more conventional, and suggested there could be an added landing. On the topic of the plaza, he noted the connection to the plaza in the trellis area could be important, and asked if they could get another stair or

connection. Without an additional connection, he stated, all the attention is diverted to the west of the T-headhouse. Mr. Sieniewicz noted that on page 20 of the design submission there is an image that shows the view of 325 Main Street from Volpe. Regarding his email to CDD staff, relative to the thermal performance, he noted the City is looking to move to net zero, and that Cambridge needs a higher performance envelop code. He also noted that he did not want to debate EUI's at the moment, but that perhaps independent debate could occur in design review. He noted the building is getting better, and that the process is very hard on the tenants, board and staff, and that he is ready to approve the building knowing that the applicant will take the comments they heard at the meeting seriously.

Mr. Cohen asked if the Planning Board members were ready to proceed with a vote? The audience noted public comment was not offered. The CRA opened the meeting to public comment.

Heather Hoffman 213 Hurley Street – Ms. Hoffman noted she made her comments last week, but that the trees she sees in the presentation pictures made her remember the board member's question of what is actually going to grow here? She explained it makes her feel the trees on the roof garden is a snare in the delusion. She would like to be wrong, but she would like to know what will actually grow here?

Mr. Cohen invited Mr. Lemon to respond to Ms. Hoffman's question.

Mr. Lemon noted in past design review meetings they did a species analysis to show what will grow in what sections of the terrace and garden. He explained the conditions on the second-floor terrace gets eastern sunlight, so there will be sun on the second-floor terrace. Mr. Lemon showed a plant palette that the plant specialists in their office have identified can grow in the terrace and roof garden area. He then reviewed the sun-shade analysis completed by Sasaki Associates, and explained two or three people in their office are great with species, and they will be working on this project. He explained the area will be different than it is today, but that they are very invested to retain the garden feel with new micro-climate conditions.

Mr. Cohen noted there was one issue that was not addressed, regarding bike parking access. Ms. Schrock noted bike parking is being studied in conjunction with the tenant. She explained they are working with their tenant with what is an evolving and campus wide bike parking system. She noted new bike parking will be located in the basement of the building. She noted access to the bike parking space could either be from Main Street or Pioneer Way, through the tenant lobby and down the service elevator. Ms. Schrock noted the tenant wants to operate the security of the space themselves. She explained they are also studying an alternative way to get into the basement space. She noted the alternative design includes a connection through the Green Garage, with a connection from the garage lower level to the basement of 325 Main Street. The connection will be made by a staircase with a "runnel", along with an accessible ramp, that would allow users to walk their bikes down the stairs. Mr. Crawford asked if the current Google bike parking is fully used? Ms. Schrock noted the space at times is fully used. She also noted there will be a system that tells Google employees if a bike room is fully occupied. Mr. Cohen noted short-term bicycle racks are needed for the building. Ms. Schrock noted the slides show the location of the short-term racks on Main Street, the Plaza and Pioneer Way.

Ms. Drury asked the CRA board if someone is ready to make a motion. Mr. Bator presented the motion:

"Recognizing the good progress made by Boston Properties the appropriate step of the CRA is to defer the approval to Design Review."

Ms. Drury seconded and called for a vote. The motion was passed unanimously. Mr. Crawford made a motion to adjourn and all board members agreed. The meeting adjourned at 10:06pm.