

**CRA Design Review Committee**  
**Held Virtually on Zoom**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

Attendees – Kathy Born (CRA Board), Barry Zevin (CRA Board), Margaret Drury (CRA Board), Conrad Crawford (CRA Board) Tom Sieniewicz (Planning Board), Suzannah Bigolin (CDD), Brian Skrovig (PCA), Tony Markese (PCA) Patricia Smirnoudis (Stantec), Eric Mo (BXP), Ian Hatch (BXP), Michael Tilford (BXP), Michael O’Hearn (BXP), Christian Lemon (Lemon Brooke), Tom Evans (CRA), Alex Levering (CRA), Ellen Shore (CRA) Carlos Peralta (CRA), John Hawkinson (Cambridge Day) Bob Simha (Public), Heather Hoffman (Public).

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In response to the COVID-19 State of Emergency, on March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. The Order allows government bodies subject to the law to meet using remote participation, without presence of members of the general public, the chair, or a quorum of the public body in a physical location at a specified meeting location. In accordance with the Order, the CRA held the Design Review meeting virtually via Zoom, with the ability for the public to access and participate either through a computer or by calling in via a cell phone or landline.

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**Sweetgreen Signage Proposal– Postponed**

**325 Main Street**

Kendall Plaza Trellis

The Kendall Plaza trellis is located on the southern facade of the Marriott building. Removal or partial removal of the trellis was under consideration to create a better visual connection from Kendall Plaza to the Roof Garden and from Kendall Plaza to Pioneer Way. Boston Properties (BXP) presented plans on how the plaza beneath the trellis could be designed, and provided three trellis modification options: partial trellis removal, by removing the trellis on the far sides of the brick entryways, complete trellis removal with a cap creating a raised roof over the main entryway, or complete trellis removal with the columns removed over the main entryway.

Committee members agreed the partial removal of the trellis was the preferred option. It was noted the trellis allows for the Marriott and pedestrian connection entryway to be scaled correctly, and that a prominent entrance is needed for the size of the hotel and the importance of the pedestrian passageway to Broadway. The committee liked the concept of having an outdoor space on the plaza that had couches with a roof over it, and thought the trellis structure helped to create a seating zone that is separate from the larger plaza space, which was preferred. The committee discussed a letter received from Bjorn Poonen, a member of the

public, objecting to fire pits on the Plaza. Barry Zevin agreed with Mr. Poonen's comments. It was asked if greenery was possible on the top of the brick entryways. BXP confirmed the structures have irrigation and that it would be possible to grow plants. The brick entryway faces were identified as potential locations for art, and BXP agreed the brick faces could be added as art locations in the art masterplan.

Action Items – For BXP - Move forward with the partial removal trellis option. Remove the fire pit element on the plaza. Add vegetation to the brick entryway tops and include the two brick entryway faces as opportunities for art in the art masterplan.

### Social Stair Wall

BXP presented different digital screen concepts for the social stair terracotta wall. It was explained the screens will be flush or coplanar within the wall, and that the screen content could be flexible. There was discussion about the preferred screen options. Interest was heard for the full screen (titled Option 1) and "exploded" screen (titled Option 2) versions, but the hybrid (titled "daytime") screen option, a mix between Options 1 and 2, received the greatest support. The importance of the screen's night mode was identified, as it was noted residents would be living just across the street. BXP mentioned there will be a time when all lights shut off at night and that the building will adhere to LEED Gold lighting standards.

There was discussion about the social stair's width, railing, and benches. Some members of the committee expressed their interest in seeing the stair area allocated to pedestrians be wider, others felt the area was wide-enough. It was noted the stairs will need to be maintained in a demanding environment with snow and ice, and that they need to be easy to take care of. Questions were raised about how the stairs interface with the stair benches, and it was suggested the transition might be dangerous. Some members noted the seating should either be removed or modified. A suggestion was made to look into a seating overlay, to allow benches to be removed if they cause accessibility issues or maintenance concerns. Pickard Chilton Architects (PCA) noted they would follow up with details of the social stair, showing how the stair transitions into seating, how it is put together, providing sections with people seated, and information on the stair code requirements.

Additional questions were raised about the elevation of the social stair against the alley between the stair and the MBTA headhouse. It was noted the elevation could pick up some of the screen wall design to provide navigational wayfinding signage. PCA noted they would also provide details showing the elevations of the headhouse alleyway area.

Action Item: For BXP – To continue to refine the hybrid option of the social stair screen, and to submit design details noted by PCA above on the social stair and headhouse alleyway. Consider the opportunity to have the social stair benches be seating overlays to allow removal if needed. Content of the social stair screen should be reviewed during the approval of the building's retail signage and incorporated in the art master plan.

### 325 Main Street Base Building Lighting

BXP heard feedback that they should not emulate 145 Broadway's soffit lighting. Instead BXP showed soffit lighting designs that softly washed each soffit's surface. The committee agreed they were satisfied with the lighting details. Questions were asked about how the apertures were lit. PCA explained they were lit by a small fixture mounted outside of the building that guides light to the surfaces on the sloped glass.

The temperature or warmth of the light was discussed, PCA stated that in general they have selected warmer white light colors, but that every light has some variability or range they can select from. For more details, PCA offered to regroup with the project's lighting consultant to compose a memo detailing the temperature and planned timing to turn off the lights each night.

Action Item: For BXP – submit a memo detailing the temperature and timing of the architectural lighting.

### Roof Top Garden Lighting

BXP was asked to review Roof Garden lighting to discuss uplighting concerns. BXP confirmed they are in compliance with all City of Cambridge uplighting codes and that the garden lights will be turned off, except those required for egress, at dusk during the winter months and after 11pm during the summer months. A question was asked about the height of the roof garden monospots, noting they should be pedestrian scale.

Action Item: For BXP – Confirm height of monospots.

### Roof Garden Entry Gate

BXP presented a new roof garden entry gate design with a wood veneer on a steel beam, with signage letters raised above the beam. It was agreed the steel beam with wood veneer was not a desired design direction, and the gate should be lighter, more in line with the building's architecture, and represent the significance and importance of the entryway. Alternative concepts were suggested, such as a laced truss, which would help lighten the structure, or a steel girder design. It was requested that additional greenery be added at the roof top entrance that would be visible from the plaza.

Questions were asked about the design of the terrace stairs and details of the stair facia. PCA noted they would put a design package together, with renderings to better explain the planned design. It was also stated that the facia should be included as part of the public realm visual mockup.

Action Item: For BXP – To recommend an alternative roof garden gate beam structure that's more in line with the building's architecture and submit a stair detail.