

Date: 4/18/2022
To: CRA Board
From: Alex Levering and Tom Evans
RE: 250 and 290 Binney Street Schematic Design Review

Project Title: 250 and 290 Binney Street Schematic Design (SD) Review Submission
Applicant: Boston Properties (BXP)
Submission Prepared by: Pickard Chilton Architects / VHB / Lemon Brooke

INTRODUCTION

The 250 and 290 Binney Street Schematic Design (SD) review plans submitted on 1/28/2022 and updated on 3/15/2022, are for two commercial buildings consisting of 432,740 square feet and 424,565 square feet respectively. The two buildings will replace an existing above ground parking garage, and a two-story lab manufacturing building containing approximately 62,576 square feet. An eight-level underground parking garage located beneath the two commercial buildings will provide 1,584 parking spaces. Both of the buildings will reach a height of 250 feet of occupied space, with penthouses proposed above 320 feet.

The building design also proposes new active use retail and bicycle valet space along the southern edges of the respective buildings. The proposal will enhance and expand public open space at the southern edge of 250 Binney Street along the Northern East / West Connector connecting the Center Plaza to the 6th Street Walkway and the Volpe Development to the east via Potter Street.

The two commercial buildings have been designed to work around the needed Eversource substation infrastructure, which has involved aligning the building foundations north of the substation underground slurry wall, and designing around other infrastructure needs including ventilation shafts. Additionally, the 290 Binney Street building accommodates distribution cables to pass under the building to connect to the electrical street grid on Binney Street. The site also has a number of other existing utility routes, including a large steam line located along the southern edges of the buildings, which is co-located with the Northern East/West Connector and will pass through part of the underground parking garage.

CRA PROCESS TO DATE

KSURP Amendment II and MXD Article 14 Zoning Amendment Approval	02/03/2021
CRA Design Review Committee Presentation	03/30/2021
1 st Virtual Open House Community Meeting	03/31/2021

Open Office Hours – Review and Q&A	04/04/2021
ECPT Meeting	04/14/2021
2 nd Virtual Open House Community Meeting	05/13/2021
Joint Planning Board and CRA Board Hearing	05/18/2021
Joint Planning Board and CRA Board Hearing	09/28/2021
CRA Design Review Committee Presentation on 250 and 290 Binney Street	10/27/2021
Approval of the IDCP Amendment II by CRA Board	12/15/2021
1 st Commercial 250 & 290 Schematic Design Review Book submitted	01/28/2022
CRA Design Review Committee Presentation on 250 and 290 Binney Street	02/23/2022
2 nd Commercial 250 & 290 Schematic Design Review Book submitted	03/15/2022
Joint Planning Board / CRA Board Hearing	04/19/2022

Throughout the course of the 250 and 290 Binney Street review processes, the design team has refined the proposed building massing and architectural forms. Through response to public comment during the design review process, the buildings have sought to decrease their apparent massing through façade articulation and materiality, while realigning the building footprints and chamfering the building corners to provide a more dynamic space between the two buildings. The designs have included large and small balconies to activate and humanize the building facades and take advantage of views in all directions. The designs have also sought to activate the ground floor and enhance the public realm across the site, by improving interblock permeability and making improvements to desired pedestrian connections.

This document also includes a 250 and 290 Binney Street Design Review Memo by the CRA’s design consultant, David Gamble (Exhibit A). Also attached are the February 23, 2022 Design Review Committee meeting notes, which had joint CRA and Planning Board representation (Exhibit B).

250 AND 290 SCHEMATIC DESIGN DISCUSSION

This pair of commercial buildings make a dramatic presence on the skyline. The proposed design attempts to provide two buildings that work together, hosting similar commercial uses, but also remain as distinct objects with varying façade treatments. The buildings are intended to be a departure from traditional building forms, and this unique design has drawn mixed reaction in review thus far. Staff believe there are many strong characteristics about the architecture, and conceptually work to express innovation for Kendall Square. There are areas where design modifications are suggested, and details requested requiring further study. Together the proposal presents a great deal to review, discuss, and consider for approval, and additional design modifications will be provided at the meeting. Thus, at this point, staff recommends that elements of the design should be slated for follow up review in either additional schematic design review meeting(s) or more detailed study at the Design Development phase. Some topics for further reflection by the Board, modification proposals or requests for clarification are discussed below.

250 and 290 Building Massing and Design

250 Binney Street & East Plaza Drive: While the rotated building layout of 250 and 290 Binney Street with a wider opening at Binney Street pinching inward toward Center Plaza, helps to create a stronger sense of entry into the parcel, this has also created a large area of paved space and truck apron on the southwestern edge of 250 Binney Street and crowds the 6th Street linear open space. The design team should potentially explore the concept of shifting the lower level 250 Binney Street podium massing over this area. This could provide additional GFA space at the lower levels to allow massing shifts at the upper floors that could help to either increase the height variability of the building through additional setbacks, and/or to shift elements of the building away from the 6th Street Walkway.

290 Broadway Canted Structure and Penthouse: The leaning structure of 290 Binney provide a striking architectural solution to the site constraints, which has drawn varying reactions from reviewers thus far. The angled structure provide visibility to and from the buildings across multiple view corridors. This approach helps distinguish the two buildings from each other. For CRA staff, the urban design concern is how this angled mass and building skin is carried through the penthouse, increasing the apparent height and mass. The area of most concern are the north and south facades where the balcony depth is reduced, creating a larger volume at the top. Another issue to resolve is how the façade fenestration and materials are resolved at the angled corners.

Height Variability and Penthouse Enclosure: Creating height variability between the two buildings helps to achieve a more interesting and varied roofline. The penthouse design seeks to achieve that variation for the buildings, but further design moves should be considered to decrease the perceived height in some areas and increase penthouse enclosure differentiation. It is understood that there is a large volume of mechanical needs for a lab building utilizing hybrid heating systems. Still, it seems that portions of the mechanical façade could be setback and/or treated differently from the occupied areas of the building, without creating a “party hat”, but acknowledging the change in use and providing some visual transition at the top across part of the facade.

Balconies: Staff appreciate the inclusion of balconies on all facades of the commercial buildings to help activate the buildings’ and provide a functional design solution to break up the massing. Small balconies are included on the western façade of 290 Binney Street, but staff wonder if there is value in considering larger balconies positioned on the western side of 290 Binney providing views across Cambridge, or on the east facade of 250 Binney Street facing the Volpe parcel. Additional balconies could also help to mitigate wind conditions and add complexity to the building façade. To the extent possible, the proposal should explore different rhythms of the small and large porches, balancing their contribution to façade interest and providing outdoor space to all the building floors. For example, could the pattern be adjusted so that floors with large balconies don’t have small ones, and vice versa.

Planting is also encouraged on the commercial balconies, as a way to further humanize the building, provide a calming and environmentally friendly design features, and as further described in the attached memo by Gamble Associates (Exhibit A), to help to modulate the triple-height balcony spaces. To facilitate planted terraces, the Applicant should provide the building infrastructure needed to accommodate large planted installations in the future by tenants.

Balcony Materials and “Wing-Walls”: Staff appreciate that the upper glass wrap, or “wing-walls” along the penthouse balcony corners have been removed to better distinguish, articulate and reduce the visual impact at the top of the building. Again, it would be preferred if these balconies could have at least the same depth as those below. On the rest of the building, staff recognize that these wing-walls provide enhanced comfort to users of the balcony spaces, but they also increase the apparent bulk of the building. Further study of any potential issue of bird hazards created by these design features is warranted.

Reviewers have questioned the use of terra cotta bands around the balcony for creating a delicate plane of masonry material on the façade. Further, the terra cotta creates an unresolved condition at the corners where it meets glass. It was suggested that a metal panel system might be preferred. It is noted that the soffits above the balconies will have significant visual significance to the viewers from the ground level, and how these edges are resolved at these key facades of the building is worth detailed study.

250 and 290 Site Layout and Open Space

Binney Streetscape Design: Further coordination of the site’s Binney streetscape edge is needed, including modifications to the planned Alta streetscape relating to trees, planting, pedestrian amenities and curbside use. The street design should be discussed in consultation with the CRA and City of Cambridge team that worked on the Alta design.

250 Binney Street Loading: The loading diagram with turning movements present dramatically different curb lines than the landscaping and site plans. These differences need resolution as it seems central to the approach for the area. A curbed sidewalk area would be a preferred treatment for this side of the service drive for pedestrian access across both the loading and parking area. The painting of crosswalk markings across a paver area is an understood gesture but may transmit an unclear message for pedestrian travelers and vehicular movements – other options should be explored as discussed further below.

Pick-up & Drop-Off and Bus Layover: It appears in the plans that building pick-up and drop-off locations on the East Plaza Drive are co-located with the Biogen shuttle layover and stop. As the design progresses, further discussions should be had regarding the design, function and size needed to accommodate these uses.

Analyze Two Way Traffic on the East Plaza Drive: The two-parking garage entrance and exits for the commercial buildings are located on the East Plaza Drive. To help mitigate unnecessary traffic circulation throughout the block, the applicant should analyze the option of making traffic two-way on the northern portion of the East Plaza Drive to better accommodate vehicular circulation.

Binney Street Building Sidewalk Edge: The Binney Street sidewalk edge, where the commercial building meets the streetscape should provide an interesting and comfortable experience for pedestrians. Thoughts on how to make the street edge more pedestrian friendly, including public seating and more varied landscaping should be explored.

Building Entrances: It is important that the respective commercial building entrances are clearly visible and accessible from the East Plaza Drive and Binney Street. A notched inset entry could achieve the need for an entry area serving both roadways. The lobby design for ground floor at 250 Broadway should anticipate pedestrian traffic from the 6th street walkway, unless a future retail vendor is anticipated in this location.

Pedestrian Desire Lines & E/W Plaza Drive Design: Through design evolution, changes have been made to the plans to better define the pedestrian desire lines through the parcel, and to clarify the roles of the East and West Plaza Drives. This has included the addition of a colonnade on the western side of 290 Binney Street, and making changes to deemphasize the pedestrian passageway through the East Plaza Drive loading and parking garage area through changes in sidewalk design and crossings. As these designs are further developed, further review and discussion is warranted to review pedestrian safety with a focus in the East Plaza Drive area.

Further, the design of the respective plaza drives needs further attention. Ideas to continue to explore and refine include the curb-less woonerf design, paving patterns, and wayfinding, among others.

Wayfinding Plan: It is important that the Center Plaza is easily accessible and visible to the public from Binney Street and the 6th Street Walkway. Further conversations about wayfinding signage should be considered as the design progresses, and should be coordinated with the wayfinding programs already installed by the KSA, BXP (Kendall Center), and Biogen.

Commercial Ground Floor Activation and Design: As the Center Plaza design develops in a later design review phase, the layout and context of the retail space of 290 Binney Street should be reviewed, and discussed further. Additionally, further detail of the ground floor interim valet, and long-term uses of each building in context with the immediate surrounding open space should be discussed. The value of the plaza café building is reduced when this area can become retail.

250 Binney Street Massing & Northern East/West Connector: Enhancing the visibility and improving the pedestrian and bicycle connections along the Northern East/West Connector is an

important circulation element of the project. To increase visibility of the connector and entrance into Center Plaza from the 6th Street Walkway, a small arcade on the southeastern edge of 250 Binney Street should be considered.

Additionally, 250 Binney Street's southern ground floor space will host a bike valet system, and it is likely that many of the valet users will approach via the Kitty Knox Bicycle Path. While staff recognize grade changes must be accommodated at the southeastern edge of the building, more thought should be given to how the space will accommodate bicycles. A larger pedestrian and bicycle pathway should be considered where the Northern E/W Connector meets the 6th Street Walkway.

Trees: To facilitate construction of the buildings and Eversource Substation, trees located on site need to be removed. A tree protection or removal, and replacement strategy should be included in the commercial buildings' site plans as the design evolves. Further, the mature oak trees on the 6th Street Walkway are an important community amenity. As the design evolves close attention should be given to ensure the health of the trees is maintained.

250 Binney East Ground Level Façade: The majority of the ground level eastern façade of 250 Binney Street, approximately 65 feet, will be back-of-house space with opaque windows. While this area abuts the Kitty Knox Bicycle Path, it could provide an opportunity for art or environmental graphics that can be enjoyed by riders and users of the 6th Street Walkway alike.

250 Binney – 125 Broadway Connectors: Should building connectors between the 250 Binney Street and 125 Broadway building be desired by the future tenant, the location and design of those connectors should be reviewed further with the participation of the CRA's Design Review Committee. If connectors are pursued at this location, the removal of the currently unused connector to 110 Broadway should be undertaken.

Building Materials and Finishes

Penthouse Enclosure Materials: As discussed above, the penthouse design and enclosure façade warrant further review. To provide more of a visual transition at the top of the building, changes to portions of the curtain wall design and materials should be considered above the top occupied floor. While some of the building curtainwall could be continued vertically through the top, a design should be considered that more clearly differentiates the penthouse area, and simplifies or eases the current curtainwall design in this area.

Visual Mock-Up: As per the Design Review Document Approval Procedure (DRDAP) agreement, continued review of the building's exterior materials is needed through a visual mock-up (VMU). This includes review of the exterior building materials, including the ground floor site paving, foundation stone, and tenant railings.

Ground Level Building Façade Finishes: Staff are interested in adding more diversity to the ground level façade finishes. The terra cotta in particular feels very similar to the treatment of 145 Broadway and 325 Main Street. Including details on how these finishes are different than those two structures through additional building material submissions will be useful for the Design Review committee and staff review. It is also unclear why a band of solid material is included within the façade of the double height ground level space.

Lighting: Subtle lighting that celebrates certain architectural features of the building is supported, but there is concern that the vertical lighting strips shown on all sides of the building façades appear too harsh. Further, it may be appropriate to decrease the intensity / density of the lighting along the northern façade facing the East Cambridge neighborhood. Staff appreciate the applicant's inclusion of dimmable lighting features, and willingness to participate in a building "light curfew" during the night-time hours, which should be further discussed and defined as the design progresses.

Signage: Unnecessarily large signage areas are included in the schematic submission. The proposed signage area, especially at the top of the building, must be reduced. Large roof top signage facing toward the East Cambridge residential community should not be considered as a potential right of future tenants.

General Comments

Wind and Shadow Studies: Throughout the project site, a number of locations surrounding the 290 Binney Street building, including the northwestern corner, the southwestern corner along the West Plaza Drive, and points between the 250 and 290 Buildings on the East Service Drive, are identified as being uncomfortable during the winter months. Further, one location on Binney Street exceeds wind safety standards. Staff recognize that the Applicant has presented concepts using glass canopies along the ground level façade of the building corners, but further review is needed to ensure these modifications sufficiently improve the wind conditions, and to analyze their impact on the design of the building.

Construction Management Plan: Due to the complexity of the Eversource Substation redevelopment, and its impacts on public circulation around the block, ongoing review of the Construction Management Plan (CMP) and phasing is needed for this project.

NEXT STEPS

Once the CRA Board approves an Schematic Design submission, the CRA Staff will write an SD phase approval letter with conditions as instructed by the CRA Board. The next steps in the CRA's DRDAP would be for the Applicant to submit Design Development (DD) drawings for CRA Staff review during which various design issues can be resolved as directed by the Board. Additional meetings with the Design Review committee can be utilized to work through

remaining architectural concerns. Once DD are approved, then Construction Documents (CD) for CRA staff review and approval before the application and issuance of a full building permit. The DRDAP process also includes building an outdoor mock-up for review by CRA staff and Board members.

Exhibits:

A: Gamble Associates 250-290 Binney Street Design Review Memo – April 7, 2022

B: 250 and 290 CRA Design Review Committee Notes – February 23, 2022

Cc: Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager of Community Development

Catherine Preston Connolly, Chair of the Cambridge Planning Board

**GAMBLE
ASSOCIATES**

678 Massachusetts Avenue Suite 502
Cambridge MA 02139

April 7, 2022

Alexandra Levering, Project Manager
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
255 Main St, Cambridge, MA 02142
SENT VIA EMAIL

250-290 Binney Street
DESIGN REVIEW

Dear Alex,

Gamble Associates is pleased to submit this Design Review memo for 250-290 Binney Street. The review is based on the *Design Review Submission* dated January 21, 2022 submitted by Boston Properties. An initial review with Cambridge Redevelopment Authority staff took place on Monday, March 21, 2022. The two, 200-page documents are very thorough.

General comments

The two lab and office buildings - not identical twins but certainly siblings in their appearance - replace an existing six-story above grade parking garage and add over 850,000gsf of new development. In most Cambridge contexts this amount of building would overwhelm the surroundings. However, in Kendall Square the development's massing is actually *lower than adjacent approved projects*. All parking is located below the two buildings, and efforts have been made to integrate the development into the block through a network of open spaces. While most of the ground plane is hardscape, tree canopy and naturalized green edges are integrated where possible. The East and West Plaza Drives are envisioned as "shared streets" which will calm traffic and emphasize pedestrian movement. Together with the neighboring existing buildings and the planned residential tower, the pair of towers form an ensemble that defines a Central Plaza with east-west connections to adjacent blocks.

Specific comments

Balconies: The triple-height balconies diminish the monolithic appearance of the development by mitigating bulk and creating compelling shadow effects. Early sketches by the architect indicated a more robust landscaping of these exterior spaces. While the balconies themselves are narrow and wind loads need to be taken into effect, efforts should be made to reintroduce a landscape sensibility into these exterior spaces. In addition, special attention should be paid to the ceiling plane of the balconies as they will be visible from the ground.

Enclosure: The building elevations are elegant. The aluminum fins add a level of refinement to the building enclosure. The façade materials list terracotta or metal panels. A mock-up of the building elevation should be required as the final decision about the palette impacts the overall aesthetic.

Signage: Very large surface areas are indicated for building signage. Studies should be done that more specifically locate zones for applied building signage that don't adversely impact neighboring buildings while still ensuring brand visibility and identity.

Plaza Drive Paving: The design packet represents the right-of-way of the Plaza Drives differently. In some cases, the paving pattern is represented as gray concrete pavers and in other cases the rendering of the surface is consistent with the pedestrian pavers on either side so that the ground plane is visually consistent (290 Binney: pages 86 versus 91). Having the surface of the shared street in one color/design that matches the pedestrian zone is preferred as the public realm of the Plaza Drives visually expanded.

Sincerely,



David Gamble AIA AICP LEED AP
Principal, Gamble Associates
Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Design

Exhibit B

CRA Design Review Committee
Held Virtually on Zoom
Meeting Notes
February 23, 2022

ATTENDEES

Committee Members: Barry Zevin (CRA Board), Kathleen Born (CRA Board), Hugh Russell (Planning Board), Louis Bacci (Planning Board), Erik Thorkildsen (CDD)

CRA Staff: Tom Evans, Alexandra Levering, Fabiola Alikpokou

BXP: Ian Hatch, Michael Tilford, Keir Evans

Pickard Chilton: Brian Skrovig Anthony Markese, Andrew Barnett

Lemon Brooke: Christian Lemon

Stantec: Dave Kadish

EVERSOURCE MXD SUBSTATION DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION: 290 AND 250 BINNEY STREET COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Presentation

Discussion of the MXD Substation Commercial Building Schematic Design Submissions – Parcel 2 of the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Plan.

Committee comments

Mr. Russell said there was a lost opportunity to shape the tops of the building in a significant way because the shape now is subtle and it looks boxy. He suggested creating notches in the mechanical penthouse, creating slopes to get more dramatic shapes at the edges, or changing the materials of the penthouse. He suggested using materials other than glass and considering scale. He also shared that he is not a fan of having the penthouse façade be the same as the rest of the building, and he shared an example of what to avoid by pointing to the Harvard Graduate student dormitory on Western Avenue. He questioned why the side walkway wasn't put over the steam line, and noted he hoped the walkway on the edges of the building could be softer. Mr. Russell expressed satisfaction with the bridges and detailed shaping of the buildings. Mr. Lemon expressed that they will examine the side walkway over the steam line idea, while noting that, the side walkway is currently over part of the underground garage structure where it is difficult to put landscape, and moving the walkway over will mean adding more hardscape to the area. He also said they would look at the sloped lawn idea. Mr. Markese said they would study the top of the building further and also that there is an opportunity to massage the

massing to make the top more distinct from the base. Still, they want to stay away from making the top appear to have a decorative party hat.

Mr. Bacci asked if it is possible to make a narrower planter against the existing building and to add seating. He shared the buildings should have individual entrances on Binney Street to make it more of a destination and give it its own identity. He also suggested reexamining the garage entrances combined with the loading dock as it appears to be service entrances and may become confusing. Mr. Bacci thinks BXP needs to explain why the trees should be cut down on Binney Street for the electrical distribution. He asked for a rendering of the north and south views of the buildings to see how the tenant bridges look from those angles. He noted satisfaction with how the façade looked in the sun and shade.

Mr. Thorkildsen expressed how pleased he was with the overall project, including the accommodation of the substation, the creation of a new public space in the center, improvements of the drives, and the east/west connectors. He continued by saying his comments are drawn from the K2 Plans and Volpe Guidelines. He said he liked the idea of rotating the eastern building to pinch down towards Binney and to open up towards the plaza because it creates a stronger sense of entry from Binney Street. He asked if the buildings should look different from each other? He suggested one could be taller than the other. He shared that the lean of building C over the plaza seemed counter to the sense of the plaza as a meaningful public space, and that K2 and Volpe Design guidelines recommend buildings to be at least 85 feet away from parks. He wondered if it made sense if one end of the buildings stepped back and the other was vertical, possibly stepping building C back at the 80-foot level? He recommended thinking about reducing the horizontal grain of the façade. Regarding how the design will support and engage ground-level life both inside/outside the buildings, he thought the lobby seemed large without a direct entrance to Binney. He thought the planted buffer between the lobbies and Binney and East Drive seemed counterproductive for street activation. He asked if the lobby should be double height? He wanted more information on the ground-level façade, including activation in the area, the difference between active use spaces and lobby façades, and plans for the back of house space. He wondered if there was too much paving between the two buildings on East Plaza Drive and if trucks would block the sidewalk zone. He asked if something could be done to address it because the area would look like a service entrance. He asked if continuous vegetation could be put on both sides of the service drive to pull pedestrians into the plaza? He wondered how much of the bicycle valet interior would be active use versus how much would be just bike storage and what activation will it contribute to the adjoining outdoor space? He wanted to see what the West Plaza Drive would be like because it might be an important pedestrian desire line. He also noted that it makes sense to have the tenant bridges be at the narrowest point between the two buildings to make the buildings a gateway to the whole development, and wondered what the options for the bridges are. He noted he would like to think more about light transmission and reflectance and was wondering about signage and its light impact on the residential areas.

Mr. Zevin agreed with Mr. Thorkildsen's comments about the lean of the building. He thought it was important to make the entrances to the buildings clearly available from the service drive

and to look at the Broad Institute on Main Street as an example, because it has a setback in an open sheltered notch from Main Street. He wanted to acknowledge that some part of the area must be a service alley with a parking entrance and loading dock, and that it won't be a friendly pedestrian experience. He wondered if it was possible to shave three to five feet off the first floor of the west edge of 290 Binney to make an arcade? He continued that the wind is a genuine concern, and roughing up the façade in a meaningful way might help. He also noted that he was perplexed by the notion that the aluminum filigrees are actual sunshades, and thought it was not much of an effort. He agreed that the top of the building might be different, but that it shouldn't be decorative. He said what bothers him the most is the disposition of the balconies and floors; he doesn't like the sliced-off façade and proposed stepping it in vertical increments or to alternate it left to right. He said he was disconcerted by the use of the terracotta as a skirt on the long balconies. He also asked what was holding the balconies up? Mr. Markese answered that the buildings are steel. Therefore, the terraces are cantilevered from columns set back from the enclosure line. Mr. Zevin wondered if the terraces could be arranged around the façade in a more complex way. Mr. Markese commented that it is a personal liking on how to organize the façade and noted there is a certain amount of planning needed to make sure the terraces are useable and functional. Mr. Markese continued by saying that the arrangement could be more random. Mr. Zevin noted that he liked the arrangement on page 81 of the IDCP book. Mr. Markese pointed out that the design Mr. Zevin referenced was included to show an example of a good way to light the building and not an architectural design precedent. Mr. Zevin ended by saying he would argue for more complexity in the terrace's arrangements, like putting a balcony on the east façade looking over Volpe. Mr. Markese noted that studying the cadence of the carving on the two ends might be a good way to connect some of the comments about the top, the midsection, and the base of the buildings, and that there may be a way to reshape and align. This is something they will look at and come back with some ideas. He also said they would study the arcade idea, but they might be limited in pushing and pulling the functional spaces. They will provide more detail in refining the next-level development of the façade in terms of the overhead weather projection and wind.

Ms. Born liked the idea of exploring an arcade along with the east building that faces the drive, but she is unclear if one side of the drive is more pedestrian-friendly. She also noted that the Eastern Plaza Drive off of Binney is not friendly for pedestrians. Mr. Zevin said that area isn't going to be pedestrian-friendly, and people should be discouraged from walking in that area. Mr. Lemon shared that while that area won't be pedestrian-friendly, people will try to walk through, and work should be done to create a designated area. Ms. Born continued by noting that the vertical sunshades looked like the fins on the 325 Street building and asked if the sunshade was a deeper fin? Mr. Markese answered yes, and that they were deeper to provide shading on the east and west façade. Ms. Born asked if the shades would be movable or be angled in a specific way to screen the sun because it is currently vertical? Mr. Markese answered that it can be perpendicular to the glass and still be considered a sunshade. He also noted that the vertical portion happens at the vision glass, and the bending and the articulation happen at the spandrel, and it was designed that way on purpose.

Ms. Born shared that it is okay to have varying opinions about how to treat the tops of buildings, and everyone cannot be pleased.

Mr. Markese asked Ms. Born her perspective on how different the buildings should be? He noted that because the buildings are being designed and will be built simultaneously, they are expected to appear to be in the same family. He continued that while there is no way to move from them appearing similar, they are playing with façade articulation and screens and will continue to work on ways to differentiate the two, but the difference won't be drastic. Mr. Zevin said they are doing it very well. Ms. Born also agreed that the designers are doing a great job, and the difference should be purposeful differences.

Mr. Russell offered that at the mechanical penthouse, there are four strips, and he wondered what would happen if there were eight strips? It might mean that there is something strong happening on the top. Mr. Markese said that he is not a party hat person, but he appreciated the direction.

Ms. Levering noted that it is essential to look at how people will be using the service drives because it will be an opportunity to invite people into the space.

Public comments

A public member asked how much light will the Center Plaza get and what is the capacity of the space? They voiced concern that everything seemed pedestrian-unfriendly and that the Center Plaza isn't visible enough from the Sixth Street Connector for pedestrians to know they can enter the space. They recognized a wider entrance between the two commercial buildings, but the paving makes it appear more like a vehicular entrance than a pedestrian entrance. They also noted that the façade of the commercial buildings doesn't make the area feel pedestrian-friendly. They also asked how the denser infrastructure would impact the vegetation on the Sixth Street Walkway? They appreciated the variety of gardens in the area. Still, they wondered how much time it would take to get full-grown trees on Binney when the existing ones are removed and replaced and if they will be appropriately rooted, given the garage underground? As a pedestrian, they wished the buildings had more modern porticos features to create a visual connection to the Center Plaza and make the space feel friendlier. The public member also shared that they like the terracotta mimicking brick and would prefer darker colors as they are more reflective of Boston's architectural history.

Another public member agreed with the previous public member in that they, too, are concerned about the health of trees and vegetation on the Sixth Street Connector. They hoped the buildings do not block the sunlight to the trees, killing them in the long run. Regarding the pedestrian experience, they are concerned about the windiness of the area, and they hope the built environment does not make it worse.

A public member noted that while they appreciated the work of the architects, it is important to ensure the wind condition in the area is dealt with properly with more articulations. They also mentioned that the ground floors of the buildings could be more imaginative than simply having

large lobbies for access to the buildings; it could help articulate the quality of the Binney Street experience. The public member also asked the designers to consider the implication of other developments surrounding this project and the number of people it will bring into the area.