

MEMO

Perkins Eastman Architects
International PLLC

Date	4/19/2019	
Project Name	First Street Parcel B & Parcel C	
Project Number	54862.00.0	
Subject	First Street Assemblage Perkins Eastman Design Updates	
From	Christopher Boyce	c.boyce@perkinseastman.com
	T: 617.449.4006	F: Fax Number
To	Suzannah Bigolin	
	City of Cambridge	
	T: Telephone Number	F: Fax Number
	sbigolin@cambridgema.gov	VIA: VIA

cc:

Below outlines the design team narrative to explain the design intent and recent changes that have been discussed and guided through work with the CDD staff.

OPEN SPACE DESIGN REVIEW

- This open space layout was created through a focus on pedestrian travel, and open space access. The design team aimed to create a filter or buffer along the Charles Street edge that would protect the lawn from the street scape while enhancing the street scape with further green canopy coverage. The garage head house we anticipate will be used by both residential tenants of parcel C and the office (office has 42 spaced in the garage). We have created an angled path that guides pedestrians towards the office which will be the most frequently used pathway – this cuts the Charles street edge at an angle and greets the street edge at a street tree location which lead to a wider pathway. This wider path will not be flanked with pedestrian benches allowing for a moment to stop in sit rather than simply a pathway as advised by Staff comments. Additionally, this filter creates a pinch point or threshold to the open space between two large trees that will be planted on landscape berms. The two berms at the Charles Street edge are needed to allow for tree root depth since these trees are being planted over our parking structure. Trees in this location not only add to the impact of the street trees along the

Charles street edge but more importantly they provide additional tree canopy with its precious shade and noise dampening. Lastly, we feel that these forms throughout the open space will provide variation and relief from the neighboring urban orthogonal grid. This will be experience by pedestrians walking through the space as well as by those looking down on the space.

- We feel this buffer or filter zone allows for a greatly enhanced pedestrian experience. At eye level the pedestrian will have strong visual connection to the lawn area. The edge is open and allows for public access but much like PO square in Boston or even the public garden, pedestrians are guiding to specific points of entry where they then feel a sense of arrival and privacy away from the streets. They will experience the feeling of crossing a threshold into a protected and calmer are of open space. We have found that this filter concept creates a safer environment for children and families to enjoy without concern about vehicle proximity and the busy street noise.

After staff comments regarding the south lawn and pedestrian green space the design team reduced the size of the private patios adjacent to the Parcel C building to create a larger lawn space, while also shifting and enhancing the hardscape publically accessible patio adjacent to the amphitheater seating to connect to this pathway.

- Through meetings with DPW we have now increased the total number of street trees to 17 and have filled all available locations to create a dense continuous canopy on all sides of the project. Three new on Hurley Street, four new trees on first street and five new on Charles. The power lines through negotiations with Eversource will be placed below ground on Hurley – this unfortunately is not possible due to service on Charles Street. A pergola structure has been shown to shade the amphitheater seating, a feature we feel will greatly enhance this park space, and the vestibule but it will not cover the ramp due to height concerns for vehicles and the creation of a larger structure directly adjacent to the neighboring housing on Second Street.
- On Hurley Street past the Parcel B building a pedestrian would first experience a sidewalk which follows the rear of the B building before meeting the public sidewalk and then our short term bike parking which has a fence and brick piers to shield this zone from the retail surface parking. A covered bike shelter sits at the entrance to the mid-block connecting path, with bike parking that is in addition to the required short term supply for this project. This mid-block path is announced at the street edge with a framed entrance before arriving at the small patios and plantings that buffer the Hurley Street building from the sidewalk. Lastly along this Hurley Street edge at the far end of the site above the Hurley Building are the necessary services (water room, transformer etc) that would sit behind the same 36” tall fencing. These services can be located either on this side of the building or plan-south and we felt this was a better opportunity to screen them effectively and not lose valuable green space. Our goal was not to create a continuous and aligned street wall for the project align Hurley but to create a soft buffer with many areas of openings for pedestrians, setback for buildings and plantings or small patios and

bike shelters. This varied use of active spaces and planting spaces we felt made a more lively street edge that is commonly found in neighborhoods rather than a uniform edge that may define a more institutional feel.

- The patios to the east of the residential units in Parcel C are shielded from public view using a board form concrete wall with a slated wood fence above it that will allow for private space and backyards within this larger open space. We have reduced the depth of these private patios to make more space for the south lawn here since this area will receive the best light. This is one change noted and shown on the updated site plan (attached). This shift reduces the private patio space, and increases the publically accessible open space south lawn, while also simplifying this area.
- A hardscape zone was enhanced and lengthened to connect to this central parcel C entrance as well which further simplifies the landscape, while maintaining our concept – and giving more space as a publically accessible seating zone.

PARCEL B DESIGN UPDATES

Since our design review submission the design team has continued to coordinate and work through the development of these projects with the general contractor and brought impactful design changes to the CDD staff. The major changes as discussed with staff are outlined below.

FLOOR-TO-FLOOR HEIGHTS

Further analysis of the interior dwelling units through design development lead to a rethinking of the ceiling heights for the Parcel B residential project to optimize residential ceiling heights. The residential unit heights will now be a minimum of 8'-6" and will enhance the residential units of this project. Due to this increase in residential unit heights and a maximum building height of 65' the retail zone was reduced in height. The retail floor to floor with now be 14'-2" which is 10" less than the 15'-0" floor to floor that has been successful in the Parcel A office project that was recently completed next door. This revised retail height is nearly 10" taller than the retail floor to floor height at 159 First Street, a project developed and constructed by the applicant within this development parcel, where Toscanini's Ice Cream now resides. To further enhance this retail space the design team has been engaged with the General Contractor to coordinate steel beam penetrations for the resident utilities so that few major services sit below the bottom of beams heights allowing for taller finished ceiling heights within this space.

The façade was altered slightly to accommodate these floor to floor shifts which lead to a reduction in the brick banding above the retail space and before the first residential window. The signage band remains and in lieu of a spandrel glass panel or louver band under this signage band the design team has increased the transparent storefront glazing by 10" to meet this signage band metal.

UTILITY VAULT

The Eversource Vault massing change was shown during the last amendment process but the design for how to treat this area had not yet been resolved. The design team has explored this area with the Staff and now shows a shadow box storefront system that continues the feeling and aesthetic of the retail environment at the First & Charles street corner with a revised and more pronounced residential entrance. Further staff review and comment guided the design team to add a pier along this façade that breaks up the long run of storefront and add another street tree to further shield and buffer this utility façade. This revised residential entry creates a well illuminated area for pedestrian seating along Charles Street and announced the presence of the residential building on this street edge.

METAL PANEL

The metal panel façade that lives on the recessed portion of the Parcel B First Street façade as well as the top floor and roof overbuild (mechanical screen) on the Charles Street façade has been changed to a standing seam metal panel with joints every 16" to match the Parcel C building top floors. This adds a texture and rhythm to the façade that did not exist previously. The design team had studied a smaller and flatter metal panel system with narrower spacing for this area yet conversations with the CDD staff guided this to a larger panel size, and standing seam.