

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE**  
**CAPITAL CENTER COMMISSION**

**TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2006**  
**7:30 AM**  
**FIRST FLOOR THEATER**  
**30 EXCHANGE TERRACE**  
**PROVIDENCE, RI 02903**

**1. Roll Call**

Chairman Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:35 AM. Members present included Leslie A. Gardner, Derek Bradford, Merlin DeConti (left 9:10 AM), Thomas Deller and Barry Fain (arrived 7:50 AM, left 9:00 AM). Members absent included Wilfrid L. Gates, Jr., Glenn Kumekawa and Robert Reichley.

Staff present included Deborah Melino-Wender, Executive Director, and David Spillane, Design Consultant.

Others present included Christopher Thomas, Philip Stone and Steve Durkee, Capital Center Commission; Milton Hannah and Tim More, Benefit Street; David Brussat, Providence Journal; Tom Moses, MAJ; James Wurst and Adolfo Reyna, NBWW; Ron Chrzanowski and Barbara Dryer, Capital Properties; Charles Meyers, Metropark; Scott Bamford, Haley Aldrich; Larry Bliss, Mayors Office; Amy Vitale, Partridge, Snow & Hahn; Tom Niles, Mike Voccola and Lee Burneson, TPG; Diane Soule, DCSA, John Freeman, PAF; Andrea Stape, Providence Journal; Jack Gold, PPS; Duncan Pendlebury and Glenn Allen, Jung Brannen.

**2. Minutes**

The motion was duly made, seconded and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of the Design Review Committee meeting of April 18, 2006

**3. Report of the Executive Director**

The Director noted that a Design Review Committee meeting is scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup> at which time the developers will present proposed modifications for the Masonic Temple.

#### **4. Parcel 11: Westin Hotel Expansion: Proposed Design Modifications**

Mr. Voccolo stated that the project is at or ahead of schedule and that sales are ahead of schedule. He announced that they have secured Flemings as its major restaurant tenant. Mr. Voccola also stated that Mr. Pendlebury would be presenting minor revisions to the project.

Mr. Pendlebury then proceeded with the presentation. He stated that there were some minor changes made to accommodate Flemings. He then presented the other proposed changes to the project as follows:

1. Changes to the Roofs of the Buildings: Mr. Pendlebury presented elevations showing a modified roofline on the tower. He stated that the revised design provides for further stepping back and gives a north-south ridgeline. On the hotel room building, the roof structure has been removed to clean it up. He stated that the team wanted the project to look like four separate buildings. The removal of this roof also provides views of the State House for two floors of rooms, but does expose the elevator tower.

Mr. DeConti stated that he likes the separation of the buildings, but that the roofline of the low building looks too cut off. He stated that the top of the tower also needs something. Mr. Bradford stated that the lower building roofline is too abrupt and needs something to finish it, perhaps a cornice. Mr. Spillane stated that this roof needs more articulation. Mr. Bradford stated that the tall roof looks clunkier and less elegant than the approved plan. Ms. Gardner agreed. Mr. Pendlebury stated that the cooling tower was not designed when the design was originally approved and that it is more difficult to put a roof over a cooling tower. Mr. Spillane stated that the changes at the top, along with the loss of the curve of the balconies results in a loss of elegance in the project. He suggested that more elegance might be regained with more detail at the top. Mr. Bradford suggested that perhaps the entire top of the tower needed to be treated differently from the rest of the tower, including window and balcony types. Ms. Gardner stated that the top of the low building facing the north looked unfinished.

2. Balconies: Mr. Pendlebury stated that the original balconies were rounded. The proposal is for squared off balconies which provide more usable space.

Mr. Spillane stated that the loss of the curve of the balconies, particularly in combination with the change at the top of the building, results in a loss of elegance of the building. In general, there was no objection to the squared balconies.

3. Precast Color: Mr. Pendlebury stated that in the original design, the precast was beige at the base, then white on the upper levels. He stated that they are proposing all the precast to now be beige. He stated that the beige is a stronger color than the white.

There was no objection to the proposed precast color change from the committee members.

4. Louvers: Mr. Pendlebury stated that the design of the louvers has changed from the original and that two different sets of grillwork would now be included. He presented the full elevations of the building to present this proposed change. Additionally, Mr. Pendlebury stated that louvers were added above the storefronts and painted out the same color of the storefronts.

The Committee determined that it needed to see larger detail on this item.

5. Entrances to Flemings and Residences. Mr. Pendlebury noted that the entrances to these areas had been revised.

The Committee determined that it needed to see larger detail on this item, because the detail was too small to confirm.

6. Flemings Signage: Mr. Pendlebury briefly described the signage for Flemings, but no detailed plans or elevations were presented.

The Committee determined that it needed to see more and larger detail on this item.

7. Lighting: Mr. Pendlebury presented the night view of the project and described the lighting.

The Committee did not state any objections to the lighting plan, but will need to review and approve the lighting fixtures.

8. Landscaping: Mr. Pendlebury stated that they are proposing eliminating the stepping of the landscaping along Francis Street. Also, the paving pattern leading to the escalator entrance has been modified.

Ms. Gardner stated that there was a lot of time spent on the landscaping to have it change along Francis Street. She requested more detail on this issue.

Ms. Gardner stated that she and the Executive Director were unaware that the proposed changes would be so significant and that the timing today allowed only for an overview. She asked the design team to return to the DRC as quickly as possible with very detailed information on the proposed changes. At a minimum, Ms. Gardner stated that this information needs to include the following: (1) a revision in the peak of the tall towers to reflect the concerns expressed by members of the Commission; (2) a revision to the proposed change to roofline of lower tower, particularly on the north view; (3) larger detailed drawings on each type of louver so that the details of the louvers are readable; (4) larger detail on the entrances to both Flemings and the condo units; (5) larger detail and a separate

presentation on the Flemings signage. The signage needs to take into account the zoning regulations. Additionally, the developer needs to provide a signage calculation based on zoning requirements; (6) detail on the lighting fixtures; (7) larger scale detail on the landscaping changes, particularly along Francis Street. The developer agreed that they would try to return within two weeks to the DRC.

**5. Parcel 12: Carpionato Properties: Proposed Hotel: Design Workshop**

Mr. Kolcut stated that the project is intended to be a mixed-use project including retail, parking, hotel and perhaps some hotel condominiums. It will be a boutique hotel with few meeting rooms.

Mr. Wurst then presented the site plan and elevations. He stated that the site includes about ½ acre and is very challenging in terms of size and shape. He noted the views to both the Park and the State House. Mr. Wurst stated that the parking would include about 120 hotel rooms and 120 parking spaces. On the north, the building would follow the curve of Memorial Boulevard. The restaurant would be located in this side. The Lobby Bar would face the park. He stated that garage access and loading would be off Steeple Street. Mr. Wurst stated that the tower would have 17 floors.

Mr. Deller pointed out that it appears that parts of the building extend into the public right of way. Mr. Wurst stated that the team felt that wide sidewalks along Steeple Street would be preferred. Mr. Deller also noted the proposed plaza areas at the corners of Memorial Boulevard.

Mr. Wurst reviewed the floor plans for the upper levels. The second level includes back of house item, including employee lockers and the second story of the lobby bar. There are then 2 ½ levels of parking. At the next level is the amenity level/pool deck. This will include a few meeting rooms, a fitness area and the pool. There will be a glass greenhouse element that extends over the pool connecting to the rotunda element overlooking the park. At the north side of the building will be a terrace overlooking the State House. The hotel tower will have 18 hotel rooms per floor, including corner suites. All the rooms will have balconies. The penthouse level will include a concierge lounge, deck and two presidential suites. This area will have 2 story windows.

Mr. Wurst stated that the building is 200' high, and 40' at the top. He noted that the building has a precast base and that the project is designed in a contemporary residential style. He presented the various elevations for the project. Mr. Wurst noted that they had explored below grade parking, but it was too expensive.

Ms. Gardner stated that the Committee needs to see a massing model of the project. She then asked the Committee for comments on the presentation. Mr. Spillane stated that this is a complicated site with three important streets. He said that it is a complex program to fit on the site. Mr. Spillane stated that the public realm elements are not clear at this point. He noted that Exchange Street is the

primary pedestrian street and that the edge corner conditions seem left over. At the ground level, Mr. Spillane stated that the facades are too solid and that the guidelines encourage transparency. He noted the gesture to the park, but that it was separate from the building. Mr. Spillane said that there are a range of issues as to who relates to the pedestrian element. He noted concern with the expression of the building and how it will look at night. He noted the windows on the second level along Memorial look as though they should be part of a ballroom, but are employee locker space. He stated that the look of the building is quite advanced, but he is not sure how the exterior relates to the uses behind the façade.

Mr. Bradford stated that the massing takes advantage of the site. He said that he agrees with the concern about transparency. He noted a number of conflicts, especially along Steeple Street. Mr. Bradford stated that his biggest concern is with the language of the architecture. He stated that it appears to be a hybrid language of architecture. Mr. Bradford said that the massing is sensible and now it needs a good piece architecture to express it. He said that there needs to be a consistency of architecture; it is now too separate. He stated that the elements don't need to be separated in such a deliberate language.

Mr. DeConti questioned how the building relates to Citizens. He said that the strong high base makes it look squat. He suggested that it needs to move vertically and that it has too many different elements. Mr. Fain discussed the transition from College Hill and that the public aspect will be important. He noted that it needs to be more elegant. Mr. Deller agreed that the building looks squat and agreed with Mr. Bradford about the ground level. He said that the building does not have enough transparency to relate to the pedestrian. Mr. Bradford expressed surprise at the level of detail of the exterior when elements of the interior were not yet complete. He stated that he expects the architecture to undergo significant changes. He recommended using the whole parcel, including the corners. Ms. Gardner and Mr. Deller also agreed that the building should move out to the corners and be more vertical. Ms. Gardner also questioned locations of entrances for the pedestrians and the need for direct access to the lobby bar. Mr. Spillane pointed out that the Exchange Street sidewalk will be very important and that now it appears chopped up. Ms. Gardner stated that this is a significant route and needs to be treated accordingly.

Mr. Gold stated that he agreed with many of the comments. He said that the building looks uncomfortable on the site. He stated the importance of Steeple Street and the relationship to the River and the East Side. He noted that the top seems chateau-esque and that it seems like a building that's been added to several times. He said that he does like the curve along Memorial, but that the building does look squat.

Mr. Durkee stated that the massing strategy is good, but that it needs to be totally rethought stylistically and totally reconsidered. He stated that there is an issue of the lack of openness of the first floor. He urged the team to consider the first

floor as public space. He noted that the concern is about proportion and that the building is a collage of too much. Mr. Stone stated that it seems like a lot of building and that it needs to be more slimmed out.

The team agreed to return in a month with a massing model and refinements to the design.

**6. New Business**

There was no new business

**7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 AM.

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Wilfrid L. Gates, Jr.  
Chairman