

October 22, 2015

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Gregory J. Galer, Ph.D.

Ms. Kristen Olsen
Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance
One Ashburton Place, 15th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
Via email: kristen.olsen@state.ma.us

Re: Hurley & Lindemann Plaza Life Safety Improvements

Dear Ms. Olsen,

The Boston Preservation Alliance is Boston's primary, non-profit advocacy organization that protects and promotes the use of historic buildings and landscapes in all of the city's neighborhoods. With 40 Organizational Members, 80 Corporate Members, and a reach of 30,000 friends and supporters we represent a diverse constituency advocating for the thoughtful evolution of the city and celebration of its unique character.

Thank you for providing the Alliance the opportunity to review and comment on the draft "Hurley & Lindemann Plaza Life Safety Improvements" document. We applaud DCAMM's decision to incorporate the preservation community in planning for upgrades to this historically significant building in downtown Boston. It is evident that DCAMM recognizes the significance and sensitivity of these challenging buildings by their efforts to collaborate with us and our peers at the Boston Landmarks Commission, The Massachusetts Historical Commission, and Docomomo. The Alliance is pleased that DCAMM is taking this first step toward a long-overdue rehabilitation of Hurely & Lindemann, and we look forward to continued dialog toward transformation of this unique complex.

The draft report effectively summarizes the need for life-safety modifications and makes appropriate recommendations. However, we encourage select edits as outlined below. First, the national significance of this building as one of Paul Rudolph's greatest works should be better emphasized, both at the beginning of the document (1.0 Problem Statement, p. 5) and in Section 2.0 Process (page 11). As stated in the Boston Landmarks Commission survey, these buildings are among the most dramatic and architecturally ambitious of the modern office structures built during Boston's Urban Renewal. Situated around a pedestrian plaza, they have been compared to the Piazza of San Marco and the Piazza del Campo in Venice. Encapsulating Paul Rudolph's distinct aesthetic and representing one of the most influential phases in Boston's built environment, this complex is of utmost significance and the report should clearly reflect their prominent role in Boston's narrative.

Other suggested edits include:

Section 1.0 “Problem Statement” – This project presents unique challenges that should be expressly stated. Though architecture and preservation professionals across the country recognize the significance of these buildings, the general public in Boston has come to perceive the complex as derelict, even dangerous. Balancing these conflicting viewpoints within the constraints of the regulatory process requires more review and collaboration than a typical project, which should be stated in this section.

Section 1.1 “Existing Conditions of Guardrails” – It should be noted that the “temporary” (and I suggest using quotes) chain link fence has been in place for many years and the fact that the perpetuation of this fencing has only exacerbated the public disregard and dislike of the aesthetics of this building. The last paragraph of page 7 should also note that the pipe rail is not original construction.

Section 7.0 “Implementation Schedule” – This section should include a more formal review by Mass Historical Commission, Boston Landmarks Commission, Docomomo, and the Boston Preservation Alliance.

Finally, as an overall comment, the formatting and arrangement of the report seems to present a rather weak presentation for the recommended design. We suggest creating larger renderings of the final plan that clearly illustrate the proposal as well as an explicit outline of the preferred and recommended options for upgrades.

A few typos were noted as well:

Page 4 Last Bullet, last line: “and” should be “an”

Page 12 Second to last paragraph: “Perimeter Fence” – insert “at” before “the breaks”

Page 16 4.0 Consensus Solutions: Please add Boston Preservation Alliance and Massachusetts Historical Commission to the list of project stakeholders.

The Alliance looks forward to continued dialog with DCAMM and our preservation partners as this project and additional enhancements to the historic Rudolph complex move forward. We are hopeful that this life safety project is just the first of plans to transform these buildings and the plaza into a series of spaces that can be appreciated and enjoyed for many generations.

Sincerely,



Greg Galer

Executive Director

CC: Elizabeth Sherva, MA Historical Commission
Elizabeth Stifel, Boston Landmarks Commission
David Fixler, Docomomo
Carol Meeker, DCAMM