



February 9, 2015

Mr. Carlton Williams
Commissioner of Licenses and Inspections
Municipal Services Building, 11th Floor
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19102

RE: Civic Design Review for 2401 Washington Avenue (Application No. 577389)

Dear Mr. Williams:

Pursuant to Section 14-304(5) of the Philadelphia Zoning Code, the Civic Design Review (CDR) Committee of the City Planning Commission completed the required review of a proposed mixed-use building at 2401 Washington Avenue.

The parcel on which the structure is proposed is bounded by Washington Avenue on the south, 24th Street to the east, a 4-foot alley and the rear yards of homes along Kater Street to the north, and 25th Street to the west. Two industrial parcels on the northeast corner of 25th and Washington occupy a corner of the block. The site is zoned "I-2" Medium Industrial, and is currently a vacant lot that includes a freestanding billboard. The site is approximately 1.05 acres (45,954 sq. ft.) and the proposal is for a 5-story, mixed-use structure of approximately 111,000 square feet that has 57 parking spaces.

At its meeting of February 3, 2015, the CDR Committee offered these comments and voted to complete the CDR process, provided that the project team meets with near neighbors to discuss their concerns about the project. This project, which requires several zoning variances, is scheduled for a review and recommendation by the whole City Planning Commission at its meeting of February 17, 2015. The CDR Committee offered these comments:

1. Meeting with near neighbors

After a request from three neighborhood residents, the developer and attorney for the project agreed to meet with near neighbors to discuss any concerns that they might have regarding the construction of 2401 Washington Avenue.

2. Storefront design

The window height at retail areas along Washington Avenue was shown as 11'-0" above grade. The Committee felt that this height was too low and that the proposed renderings appeared to show a more generous retail elevation. The developer agreed to raise the height of the underside of the balcony overhang to at least 12' or 13', thus allowing more retail glazing.

Gary J. Jastrzab
Executive Director

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3. Landscape Design and Street Trees

The design of the pocket park along 25th Street suggests that it may be in shade a significant portion of the time. The Committee requested that the landscape design professional on the team assess plant material choices for this location to assure that they will survive in an environment that is often in shade. In addition, the Committee asked the team to select a street tree for Washington Avenue that would be compatible with overhead power lines.

4. Facade materials

During the developer's presentation, window frames were represented as both black and anodized in frame finish. The architect confirmed that the windows will have black frames. In addition, the Committee noted that the acceptance of this design proposal is based upon the high quality finish materials that were shown to the CDR Committee. The Committee understands that by accepting the project as presented, that the facade materials shown will become part of the finished structure.

5. Car Share

The Committee noted that providing a parking spot for a car share vehicle would be beneficial to the building's residents and near neighbors. The design team indicated that they would attempt to contract with a car share company to occupy one of their parking spots.

6. Public bicycle parking

The CDR Committee asked that the architect indicate bicycle parking locations around the boundary of the project for use by the public, in addition to bicycle parking provided on site for building residents.

7. LEED Certification

The CDR Committee encouraged the design team to pursue their tentative plans for applying for LEED certification. The Committee further emphasized this point by saying that the sustainability of this project should be at the highest level that can be achieved.

8. Location of retail space

The CDR Committee commented that the developer may want to reconsider the location of the building's residential lobby and entrance in favor of a commercial space at the corner of 24th and Washington. The design team agreed that in the long run, locating the lobby further west on Washington Avenue would be a good idea but that they felt strongly about leaving the residential entry on the corner until the commercial environment on Washington Avenue changed or a retail tenant could be located. The CDR Committee recommended that the building be constructed at this corner in such a manner that the residential entrance and lobby might be changed out to become a commercial use in the future.

9. Signage at garage exit

The CDR Committee recommended that the property owner erect a sign at the exit of the ground floor parking to warn drivers to watch for bicyclists attempting to enter the garage at that area.

In conclusion, the Civic Design Review process has been completed for this project. Please contact me if you have any questions about the Committee's action.

Sincerely,



Gary J. Jastrzab
Executive Director

cc: Nancy Rogo Trainer, Chair, Civic Design Review Committee
Dan Garofalo, Vice-Chair, Civic Design Review Committee
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