



October 7, 2016

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

Gary J. Jastrzab
Executive Director

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Civic Design Review Chair

Daniel K. Garofalo
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Leonidas Addimando
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Michael Johns, AIA, NOMA, LEED-AP

**Re: Civic Design Review for 309-15 Callowhill Street and 444 North 3rd Street
(Application No. 708170)**

Dear Mr. Perri:

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 project at 309-315 Callowhill Street and 444 North 3rd Street.

As proposed, the project is comprised of 454 dwelling units in two towers, one that has 23 floors, and one of 26 floors. Five thousand square feet of ground floor retail will be located at the corner of 4th and Callowhill Streets. A parking garage for 233 cars is situated between the two residential towers, and one level of parking is below grade. The project totals 551,890 square feet and is within the boundaries of the “ECO” East Callowhill Overlay, which encourages height through bonuses that benefit the public. The site is bounded by 4th Street to the west, Willow Street to the north, 3rd Street to the east, and Callowhill Street to the south. The site is zoned CMX-3.

At its meeting of October 4, 2016, the Civic Design Review Committee made the following comments, and voted to complete the Civic Design Review process.

1. Provision of Generous Public Open Space in an Area Devoid of Open Space

The low point of the site, Willow Street, will be lined with storm water collection depressions that engage new public open space, totaling 23,000 square feet., at both the corner of 3rd and Willow Streets, as well as 4th and Willow Streets. This district of the City has been notably devoid of public open space for many decades and these spaces are welcome – especially since this is public open space on private property.

2. Elegant Vehicular Entrance Court from Willow Street

Between these variably-sized open lawns, a vehicular drive runs to a paved vehicular court at the midpoint of the garage and between the residential towers. The Committee observed that pedestrian movement from the two towers to the open lawns is not so well-developed, but the intent is that residents, as well as the public, can use the open grassy “active” lawns that are framed by bosques of trees for picnics, frisbee, and pick-up baseball games.

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The Committee also observed that pedestrian and vehicular circulation are not well-defined in the parking court, and that this issue needs to be further refined. The Committee noted that the overall design offered a sophisticated provision of public open space on private property. However, the maintenance of all lawns will be critical for the success of this open space. The Committee further offered that if the lawns are not used as intended, that their use should be reconsidered.

3. Affordable Housing Bonus

The applicant understands that the bonus granted for affordable housing is a legal obligation, and that this bonus is a pledge to provide such housing. There is to be no “backing out” of the requested bonus that will allow for affordable housing units within the residential towers.

4. Building Design

The Committee thought that the building design, composition, and materials were of very high quality, and that this project will be a major accomplishment in a district of the City that has been both undervalued and disregarded for more than a half-century. This project represents a milestone moment in the redefinition of a district that will begin to link the Old City and the Northern Liberties neighborhoods.

5. Parking Garage Frontage onto Callowhill Street

Both the Committee and PCPC staff thought that the elevation of the garage located on Callowhill Street, though heavily landscaped, was problematic, but probably unavoidable. Callowhill Street at this location functions as a high-speed arterial receiving traffic from an interstate highway off-ramp, and is unlikely to engender pedestrian activity. (An RCO representative pointed out that there were pockets of retail activity along Callowhill.) However, it was noted that in the future, when density increases near this block, or if any amendment was made to the Callowhill Street passage in terms of width or number of lanes, that the parking garage was designed so that it could be adapted to other purposes. The Committee applauded the team’s including this future flexibility as an integral part of the design.

The garage will be built with parallel levels of floors, not raking floors, that might become usable interior space in the future, thus allowing for a redefinition of the Callowhill Street elevation. The garage ramps are buried within the center of the structure and are not visible from any building perimeter. Callowhill Plaza at 4th and Callowhill Streets, that includes a retail space immediately adjacent a landscaped open space, is a welcome addition to the street. This retail space represents a desirable and attractive new use on the 4th Street corridor that leads directly into Old City, as well as to Northern Liberties.

6. Sustainability

The project design team was praised for its sustainable design efforts and the applicant was commended for the exemplary use of LEED Platinum certification for the project as well as commissioning efforts.

7. Staff Comments

- The design of the project is consistent with the vision of the Callowhill/Chinatown North Strategic Plan, adopted by the City Planning Commission in 2012.
- The two-tower residential design is efficient and masks the parking well. This is an appropriate location for height. Density will help establish the neighborhood and better connect neighborhoods to the north and south.
- Height bonuses totaling 204 feet for storm water management, a green building, public open space, mixed-income housing, and an ancillary retail space are all well-incorporated and are appropriate for this project.
- Controlled intersections should be considered at 3rd and Callowhill Streets and 4th and Callowhill Streets for traffic calming.
- The parking ratio used for the project – five spaces for 10 units is appropriate for this location. The Code minimum is three spaces for 10 units.

In conclusion, the Civic Design Review 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

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**Re: Civic Design Review for 1612-34 Chancellor Street, The Hyatt Centric Hotel,
(Application No. 712108)**

Dear Mr. Perri:

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 the proposed Hyatt Centric Hotel, located at 1612-34 Chancellor Street.

As proposed, the hotel is comprised of 309 hotel rooms, 7,304 square feet of ground floor retail fronting 17th Street, a second story restaurant space of 5,853 square feet, and a bi-level subterranean valet parking garage for 220 cars. The site is the western portion of the block bounded by 17th Street to the west, Chancellor Street to the north, 16th Street to the east and St. James Street to the south. The site is zoned CMX-5, and no zoning variances are required for this project.

At its meeting of October 4, 2016, the Civic Design Review Committee made the following comments, and voted to complete the Civic Design Review process.

1. Neighborhood Coordination Regarding Parking and Street Closures

The CDR Committee, PCPC staff, and community representatives asked the development team to coordinate closely with near neighbors regarding street closures during the construction process. The applicant's proposal to move parking to the south side of Chancellor Street, adjacent to their property, and to eliminate other public parking on the block caused some concern about Chancellor Street's ability to serve the loading needs of other area businesses and the availability of on-street parking. In both cases, the Committee recommended that the design team remain in close contact and coordination with near neighbors prior to closing any portion of the street or changing parking patterns.

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2. Streetscape Surrounding the Property

The CDR Committee provided several recommendations concerning the streetscape plan for the perimeter of the building:

- a. Walking zone and furnishing zone.** The Committee echoed staff concerns that the walking zone on Chancellor Street should be kept as wide as possible to facilitate easy movement of pedestrians. Options for achieving this goal include limiting the furnishing zone on the street, employing “walkable tree grates” around the new street trees, and planting trees with narrow canopies that will grow primarily taller, as opposed to wider.
- b. Street lighting.** The Committee noted that the street lighting fixtures selected by the design team should be replaced with lighting fixtures that match those on the rest of the street. They emphasized that continuity with the rest of the neighborhood was preferable to individual properties each choosing their own fixtures, and that the Streets Department would only be able to maintain and re-lamp fixtures that were like the ones already installed in the neighborhood.
- c. Eliminate potential conflicts.** The Committee noticed that there may be a potential conflict on the site plan between a lighting fixture and an ADA ramp. They advised the design team to examine this location and eliminate any potential conflicts.
- d. Coordinate with near neighbors.** The Committee noted that the pedestrian route from the hotel entrance to 16th Street was much less friendly than between the entrance and 17th Street. They recommended future coordination with near neighbors to improve the pedestrian zone to the east of the hotel property.

3. Curb Cuts and Loading Zones

Both the CDR Committee and community representatives commented that the width of curb cuts for the valet garage was too wide, and that the curb cuts and garage openings created an uncomfortable pedestrian experience with the potential for conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles. In addition, they remarked that while St. James Street was the logical place to conduct loading activities, it would necessitate the complete blockage of the street and for this reason, loading activities should be planned carefully in terms of duration and the time of day they occur.

4. Building Design

The Committee agreed that the hotel demonstrated strong design in terms of transparency, the location of retail and restaurant components, and the angle of the ground floor in plan on 17th Street. They noted that two positive additions to the building would be a direct access point to the restaurant from 17th Street with a high degree of transparency, as well as transforming the second floor garden space into an outdoor area for restaurant patrons to occupy. The development

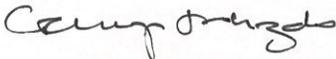
team responded that the lobby entrance to the restaurant is proposed because it is primarily a hotel-related amenity, and transforming the second floor garden space into an outdoor area for the restaurant would require a zoning variance which they did not want to pursue at this time.

5. Sustainability

In general, the project design team was praised for its sustainable design efforts and the hotel operator was commended for demanding a minimum of LEED Silver certification for all new hotels under this particular brand.

In conclusion, the Civic Design Review 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

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**Re: Civic Design Review for 2013 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia Housing Authority
Headquarters (Application No. 714380)**

Dear Mr. Perri:

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, including a second and final review, of a proposed commercial development at 2013 Ridge Avenue.

As proposed, the 2013 Ridge Avenue project totals 119,374 square feet and will consist of ground floor retail, a ground floor cafe, and 115,564 square feet of office space. The site consists of a 1.44-acre parcel that contains a vacant lot, and is located between Ridge Avenue on the west, Jefferson Street on the north, 20th Street on the East, and a vacant site to the south. The site is zoned CMX-3. The proposal is by-right construction with no refusals identified by the Department of Licenses and Inspections.

The Civic Design Review Committee conducted a review at its September 6, 2016, meeting and voted to have the applicant return for a second and final review. At its meeting of October 4, 2016, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

1. Minimal Changes from the September 6th Review is a Concern

The Committee members noted that there were very few changes to the project's design in response to the previous comments, which included:

- For the entrance plaza at Ridge and Jefferson Streets, consider simpler geometry with better shading, that might include trees, and more pedestrian entries.

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- The placement and siting of the building does not address the unique conditions of corners of blocks at Ridge Avenue. The building is a large rectangle in plan that does not relate well to its specific urban context and seems more suited to a suburban location.
- The building scale and design does not reflect the “softness” of the community, nor the role of PHA in the community. There were additional concerns that the bulk of building is out-of-scale with neighborhood.
- The CDR Committee adopted PCPC staff comments that included consideration of enclosure of the surface parking areas and other open frontages that face Ridge Avenue with new construction that has active ground floors.

The Committee expressed further concerns that the development team did not take advantage of the process of the Civic Design Review. This includes requiring a second review for the express purpose of encouraging and refining improvements that will benefit the public realm and surrounding communities.

2. Plaza at Ridge Avenue and Jefferson Street

The CDR Committee noted that the plaza has been improved, with better pedestrian flow, including another entrance from Jefferson Street. The CDR Committee further commented that another entrance from Ridge Avenue is unnecessary and that tree planting would offer shade and make the space feel more welcoming.

3. Future Phases North of Jefferson Street

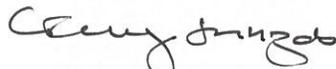
Both the Civic Design Committee members and PCPC staff stated that the diagram for future phases of development on the north side of Jefferson Street was an improvement from the earlier presentation. It is now more consistent with the recommendations put forth in the *Philadelphia2035* Lower North District Plan adopted by the City Planning Commission in May 2014.

4. Inadequate Follow-Through Between Public Agencies is a Concern

The Civic Design Review Committee members expressed disappointment that the development team's follow-through failed to achieve the design possibilities that this site presented. The CDR Committee felt that this has resulted in a missed opportunity for the project to be a more positive force in the neighborhood.

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,



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PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

CIVIC DESIGN REVIEW

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Re: Civic Design Review for 2501 Washington Avenue (Application No. 720345)

Dear Mr. Perri:

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, and voted to conclude the CDR process for 2501 Washington Avenue.

As proposed, the 2501 Washington Avenue project totals 104,943 square feet and will consist of 17 rowhomes, a pair of two-family dwellings, and a mixed-use, multi-family building totaling 64 housing units and commercial space on the ground floor. The site is a 1.02-acre parcel that contains a surface parking lot and a vacant one-story structure, and is located between 25th Street on the east, Washington Avenue on the south, a freight railway right-of-way to the southwest, Grays Ferry Avenue to the west, and rowhomes on the north fronting on Kimball Street. The site is zoned IRMX. The proposal is by-right construction with no refusals identified by the Department of Licenses and Inspections.

At its meeting of October 5, 2016, the Civic Design Review Committee voted to complete the Civic Design Review process and offered the following comments:

1. Communications with Residents

The RCO representative from South of South Neighborhood Association felt that the development team had established good communications between the developer and residents to arrange for project reviews.

2. Interior Drive Aisle

The CDR Committee had numerous comments for the interior drive aisle. They raised concerns, recognized challenges, and offered guidance on potential improvements for a space which is used by both vehicles and pedestrians to access the front doors of rowhome units. The comments in detail were as follows:

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- Recognition of the site constraints which create trade-offs between rear yards, setbacks to the rail line, and adequate widths to create walkway spaces alongside drive aisles;
- Appreciation of the development team's breaking up of long series of rowhomes into increments and with subtle shifting of building footprints;
- The interior drive is too narrow to support trees which would also conflict with turning and travel needs of vehicles, as well as garage entrances;
- The development team should consider creating greenery at upper levels including window boxes;
- The interior drive spaces are too small to create a raised curb for pedestrians but material distinctions between walking and driving surfaces need to be much more pronounced;
- The pathway connecting the interior drive from the Washington Avenue sidewalk is interrupted by a column. Consider an alternate location for either element to create an unobstructed walkway with a clear connecting sightline;
- Insure that trash service of interior drive will not conflict with vehicular movements or pedestrian activities;
- The Committee had concern with the safety of children in a space that freely mixes pedestrians and vehicles;
- The narrowness of the interior street and walkways are not consistent with the standards of a typical public street, and;
- Consider traffic calming elements such as cobblestones and speedbumps to address traffic safety concerns.

3. Building Design at Washington Avenue

The Civic Design Review Committee expressed appreciation for the façade being pulled back from Washington Avenue to allow for a wider sidewalk to support pedestrian access and activities. Additionally, CDR members expressed appreciation for the creation of a large retail space at the corner of 25th Street and Washington Avenue as a potential community amenity.

4. Building Design at Washington Avenue -- Interior Open Space

CDR Committee members offered that the interior open space contained too many elements and that its functionality and appearance would be aided by fewer elements that were larger and bolder.

5. Utility Meters

CDR members encouraged the development team to find appropriate locations for utility meters that could either be screened or hidden from both public rights-of-way and public access interior pathways.

6. Building Materials

CDR Committee members raised two concerns about building materials:

- Raise the quality of building materials that face public rights-of-way, including Washington Avenue, 25th Street, and Grays Ferry Avenue.
- Insure that the material palette shown at Civic Design Review remains at least at the level of quality shown, with no later substitutions to lower quality materials.

7. Sustainability

Encourage the development team to explore and achieve more of the sustainable design measures included on sustainability checklist. These expressly included measures for energy conservation.

8. Adoption of Philadelphia City Planning Commission Staff Comments

These included:

- Recognition of the positive amenities created by the outdoor deck and ground floor retail facing Washington Avenue;
- Encouraging the development team to work further with the Philadelphia Water Department to further explore the possibility of creating a Green Street through additional storm water detention.

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,



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Executive Director

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