PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

CIVIC DESIGN REVIEW

April 8, 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 4224 Baltimore Avenue (Application No. 581534)

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 4224 Baltimore Avenue.

The block on which the structure is proposed is bounded by Baltimore Avenue on the north, St. Marks Street to the east, single-family and multifamily residential parcels to the south, and 43rd Street to the west. The site is zoned "RM-1" for multifamily development, and is currently a vacant lot. The site is approximately 1.05 acres (47,040 sq. ft.) and the proposal is for a 5 to 8-story, mixed-use structure of approximately 138,000 square feet that has 60 parking spaces.

At its meeting of April 7, 2015, the CDR Committee offered these comments and voted to complete the CDR process. This project, which requires zoning variances, is scheduled for a review and recommendation by the whole City Planning Commission at its meeting of April 28, 2015. The CDR Committee offered these comments:

1. **Project Density**
   A project of this density is appropriate in this location, and is consistent with the neighborhood planning goals of the Spruce Hill Community Association.

2. **Building Height**
   The effect of the building height has been reduced by locating the structure sensitively on the slope. The stepping down of the building towards Clark Park has created a sense of scale that is appropriate for its site and is an amenity for the surrounding neighborhood.

3. **Site Grading at St. Marks Street**
   The grading along St. Marks Street needs to be further studied and adjusted so an appropriate slope can be achieved to insure handicapped (wheelchair) access to the required points of entry and exit. This must include study of grading of the sidewalks at the intersection of St. Marks Street and Baltimore Avenue.

4. **Protection of Trees**
   To preserve the aesthetic value of existing established trees, careful protection and maintenance is necessary during both construction and after building occupancy. The areas to be protected include both the trees themselves as well as grounds under the canopy of their branches.

Gary J. Jastrzab
Executive Director

Alan Greenberger, FAIA
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Nancy Rogo Trainer, FAIA, AICP
Civic Design Review Chair

Rob Dubow
Patrick Eiding
Bernard Lee, Esq.
Elizabeth K. Miller
Richard Negrin
Nilda Iris Ruiz, MBA

One Parkway Building
1515 Arch St.
13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

215-683-4615 Telephone
215-683-4630 Facsimile

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5. **Main Residential Entry at Building Realignment (notch) at Baltimore Avenue**
The main residential entrance "notch" on Baltimore Avenue is recognized as a challenging space to light and landscape because it sits on the north side of the building. This entry should have adequate lighting, plantings, and be sensitively designed for aesthetic excellence, safety, and maintenance.

6. **Philadelphia City Planning Commission Staff comments**

    a. The site plan enhances the public realm with generous sightlines to Clark Park, preserves established trees, and creates open space amenity at the ground floor.

    b. The parking area design minimizes vehicular access to create open spaces and vegetated areas.

    c. The project activates Baltimore Avenue in a manner consistent with neighboring properties through its use of large street facing windows, a ground floor fitness center and retail, and numerous balconies.

    d. The building setback at the property line at the ground floor creates a platform that provides a useful public amenity across 43rd Street from Clark Park.

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, Civic Design Review Chair, nrt23@drexel.edu
Dan Garofalo, Civic Design Review Vice Chair, danielg@upenn.edu
The Honorable Jannie Blackwell, Council 3rd District, Jannie.Blackwell@phila.gov
Marty Cabry, Chief of Staff to Councilmember Blackwell, marty.cabry@phila.gov
David M. Gest, Ballard Spahr, LLC, gestd@ballardspahr.com
Chris Blakelock, Cecil Baker Architects, CBlakelock@cecilbakerpartners.com
Barry Grossbach, Spruce Hill Neighborhood Association, b.grossbach@gmail.com
Jihad Ali, Southwest District Services, swpds@aol.com
Matthew Wolfe, 27th Republican Ward, matthew@wolfe.org
Cheli Dahal, Plans Examiner, L&I, cheli.dahal@phila.gov
R. David Schaaf, Director of Urban Design, david.schaaf@phila.gov
Jack Conviser, PCPC Urban Design Division, jack.conviser@phila.gov

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

CIVIC DESIGN REVIEW

April 13, 2015

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Philadelphia, PA 19102

RE: Civic Design Review for 3201 Race Street, (Application No. 591613)

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 project at 3201 Race Street.

The block on which the structures are proposed is comprised of several lots bounded by Race, 32nd, Summer, and Natrona Streets. The site is zoned both CMX-3 and RSA-5 and currently includes three 3-story, semi-detached homes that will be demolished, as well as a surface parking lot. Three existing semi-detached homes on the northwest corner of the block at Summer and Natrona Streets will remain.

The site is 0.7 acres and the proposal is for a mixed-use development including a multi-family residential building with 164 units, a day care center of 13,837 square feet, 12 owner-occupied town home units, 30 parking spaces, and 61 bicycle parking spaces. Altogether, the building includes 174,535 square feet of floor area and 178 dwelling units. Site improvements include a pedestrian plaza, landscaping, and site lighting. Parking is accounted for in a partially underground level accessed from 32nd Street (26 spaces) and a surface lot on Summer Street (4 spaces).

At its meeting of April 7, 2015, the Civic Design Review Committee offered these comments and voted to complete the CDR process. This project, which requires several zoning variances, is scheduled for a review and recommendation by the City Planning Commission at its meeting of April 28, 2015. The CDR Committee offered these comments:

1. **Townhomes along Summer Street**
   The CDR Committee asked that the design team make several improvements to the design of the townhomes on the north side of the site. These improvements include changing the design to be more in character with the architecture of the larger tower, moving the structures southward to make contact with the wall of the tower podium, and adding more detail and additional fenestration to the units. The

One Parkway Building
1515 Arch St.
13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

215-683-4615 Telephone
215-683-4630 Facsimile

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Committee also recommended that the townhome units be structured as an alternate housing type that is more compatible with being sited immediately adjacent to the blank parking garage wall.

2. **Community Plaza Area along Race Street**
The Committee noted that a site lighting design should be implemented for the community plaza area. Such a lighting design should maximize aesthetics and safety while ensuring that excess light does not spill into the windows of adjacent properties.

3. **Outdoor Play Space**
The Committee noted that fencing is necessary for the perimeter of the outdoor play space. This fencing should be thoughtfully designed to integrate the play space into the surrounding community plaza, while preventing people from climbing on or jumping over it. In addition, this fencing must be carefully considered because it is so close to the residential tower's main entrance.

4. **Landscaping at Townhomes along Summer Street**
The Committee mentioned that the open space adjacent the easternmost townhome at 32nd Street needed to be better defined as either public or private open space. The current configuration is ambiguous and needs more definition.

5. **Streetscape along Race Street**
The Committee requested that more active uses be incorporated at grade level along Race Street. The current design features only a blank wall with parking and bicycle storage behind. The Committee urged the designer to consider ways to activate the sidewalk along Race Street to enable a better pedestrian environment.

6. **Facade Materials**
The Committee acknowledged that the project's facade materials were difficult to discern from the supplied drawings. The suggestion was made that the project renderings more accurately show the proposed materials.

7. **Complete Streets Recommendations:**
The Committee requested that the following recommendations be incorporated into the project:

   a. Parking along Summer Street. Neither of the proposed schemes for surface parking is code-compliant. The design team should incorporate a required landscape buffer at the residential boundary while ensuring that any proposed scheme does not require cars to back out of the lot onto the street and that no parking on the opposite side of the street must be eliminated as a result.

   b. Street trees. Some proposed street trees around the perimeter of the block are too close to existing site features such as drive edges, street lights, and utility poles. Street trees, both in number and location, must be reconsidered to be compliant with Streets Department requirements.

c. Ideally, a below-grade parking garage should have two points of entry/exit for vehicles, and this design contains only one. The addition of an additional point of entry or exit would improve the safety and functionality of the parking level.

8. **Sustainable design:**
The Committee encouraged the developer and design team to seek LEED accreditation for this project. In addition, more information on the specific measures that the design team was taking to incorporate sustainable measures would be helpful in evaluating the project. Responsible storm water management measures taken should also be detailed.

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: Dan Garofalo, Vice-Chair, Civic Design Review Committee, danielg@upenn.edu
The Honorable Jannie Blackwell, City Council, 3rd District, Jannie.Blackwell@phila.gov
Marty Cabry, Chief of Staff to Councilmember Blackwell, marty.cabry@phila.gov
George Poulin, Powelton Village Civic Association, gpoulin@stradallc.com
Scott Erdy, FAIA, LEED AP, Erdy McHenry, serdy@em-arc.com
David M. Gest, Ballard Spahr LLP, gestd@ballardspahr.com
Sarah Kaiser, Plans Examiner, L&I, sarah.kaiser@phila.gov
Marty Gregorski, PCPC, marty.gregorski@phila.gov
David Schaaf, PCPC, david.schaaf@phila.gov