



June 2, 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

Nancy Rogo Trainer, FAIA, AICP
Civic Design Review Chair

Daniel K. Garofalo
Civic Design Review Vice-Chair

Cecil Baker, RA
Anita Toby Lager, ASLA
Michael Johns, AIA, NOMA, LEED-AP

**Re: Civic Design Review for 4300-26 Ridge Avenue,
“Ridge Flats” Mixed Use Development, Application No. 675493**

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 Ridge Flats mixed-use development, located at 4300-26 Ridge Avenue.

As proposed, the Ridge Flats project will consist of 206 rental units, 10,000 square feet of retail space, 194 off-street parking spaces, and 72 bicycle parking spaces. The site consists of two parcels that contain a vacant one-story building and a vacant lot, and is located between Ridge Avenue on the north, Kelly Drive on south and Calumet Street on the east. The site is zoned CMX-2.5 and is also located within the /NCA East Falls Overlay.

At its meeting of May 31, 2016, the Civic Design Review Committee made the following comments, and voted to complete the Civic Design Review process. The Civic Design Review Committee offered the following comments:

1. Project Strengths

The CDR Committee welcomed the redevelopment of this site and felt positively about the following characteristics of the proposed scheme:

- a. The creation of three sides of active frontage along Ridge Avenue, Calumet Street, and Kelly Drive;
- b. The placement of the parking within and below significant portions of the project to limit its exposure on public at-grade frontages;
- c. The use of a green wall to screen the parking frontages along Kelly Drive.

2. Public Utilities

The Committee encourages coordination with public utilities to place utility lines underground along Ridge Avenue.

3. West Elevations

The Committee encourages the use of windows within the corridors of the west façade to both enliven the façade and create a better interior environment.

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4. Lay-by Lane on Calumet Street

While no Committee members objected to the lay-by lane, some felt that it could be reduced in length to two car lengths.

5. Green Wall on Ridge Avenue

The Committee felt that the proposed green wall could be feasible, but encouraged diligent maintenance of the installation to be successful. It encouraged coordination with the Percent for Art Program on this elevation, and questioned whether or not landscaping would be accepted by the Percent for Art review committee as an art installation. The Committee also encouraged the exploration of greater architectural articulation between the wall enclosing the garage and the terraces and decks above.

6. Ridge Avenue Elevations

The Committee expressed concerns with the “monotony” of the building form along the Ridge Avenue frontage, as well as its uniformity. The Committee had several suggestions, including:

- a. The exploration of indented balconies and outdoor spaces to enliven the façade;
- b. More varied detailing of the building’s surface;
- c. Changes in color/texture/window patterns.

7. Bike Storage and Bike Sharing

The Committee encouraged locating both resident bike storage and the proposed bike share station so that they are publicly visible and/or accessible. The Committee further urged that some of the bicycle facilities be placed along Kelly Drive to activate the south façade.

8. Sustainability

The Committee urged the use of third-party verification and review of any proposed sustainable design elements, such as LEED certification.

9. Sun-Shading

The Committee suggested the use of sun-shading devices that could offer both enhanced sustainability and add further articulation to the building.

10. Inclusion of PCPC Staff Findings

The Committee urged the inclusion of the following PCPC staff findings:

- a. The Calumet Street ground floor and the decks and terraces facing Kelly Drive create transparent and welcoming frontages that activate the street and engage the open space along the river;
- b. Explore ground floor layout alternatives that avoid isolated commercial spaces;

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- c. Continue close coordination with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to insure a safe point of vehicular entry/exit from Kelly Drive;
- d. The proposed western elevation of the structure creates large blank and unarticulated surfaces that will be visible from Kelly Drive and Ridge Avenue. Explore design alternatives that offer greater architectural articulation.

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, nrt23@drexel.edu
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