



August 3, 2016

Mr. David Perri  
Commissioner of Licenses and Inspections  
Municipal Services Building, 11<sup>th</sup> 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*

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

**Re: Civic Design Review for 2621-67 Frankford Avenue, Application No. 671479**

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 residential and commercial mixed-use development proposed at 2621-67 Frankford Avenue by Woods Square, LLC.

The project's proposed location has two street frontages, including Frankford Avenue to the north, and Amber Street to the south. It is situated on the 2600 block of Frankford Avenue between East Huntington Street and East Lehigh Avenue. The site is currently occupied by a single-story vacant structure and miscellaneous parking and outdoor storage uses.

The site is approximately two acres in size (87,613 square feet), and the proposal is for a single building that includes five stories of mixed commercial and residential uses. The structure is approximately 176,000 square feet and contains 178 dwelling units. It also includes 20,000 square feet of retail space, 4,500 square feet of office space, 80 automobile parking spaces, and 55 bicycle parking spaces. The parking spaces are arranged to the east and west sides of the building in surface parking lots, as well as in a covered, at-grade parking area entered from two separate curb cuts along Amber Street. The structure is organized in three bar-shaped towers that span from Frankford Avenue to Amber Street. The proposal has been issued zoning refusals related to land use, loading, parking (both automobiles and bicycles), curb cuts, and rear yard depth.

The Civic Design Review Committee first reviewed this project at its meeting on July 5, 2016, and requested that the project return to address its concerns. At its meeting of August 2, 2016, the Civic Design Review Committee offered the following comments, and voted to complete the CDR process:

**1. Storage and Removal of Trash from the Site**

Members of the community, representatives from the convening RCO, and members of the CDR Committee all raised concerns about the flow of trash out of the site, and about the overall efficiency of the building's trash storage and removal plan. The CDR Committee encouraged the applicant to continue working with the community to satisfactorily resolve this issue.

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**2. Garden Apartment Entrances**

The Committee expressed a desire for the applicant to continue to improve the façade design for the garden apartments along two sides of the building. The Committee noted that the facades still felt as though they were more commercial than residential, despite the architect’s addition of awnings over the doors.

**3. Parking Design and Curb Cuts**

Members of the Committee asked the applicant if they would consider a redesign of the parking on the east and west sides of the building to limit the large number of curb cuts proposed for this site. One strategy for doing this would be to redesign those side lots as “dead-end” parking instead of the current through-parking design. The applicant should confirm that this configuration would be allowable by the Streets Department and Fire Department. The Committee did echo the staff’s general comment that there are too many curb cuts proposed for the site.

**4. Residential Entrance Lobbies**

The CDR Committee asked the architect to look into the size of the three residential lobbies along Amber Street. Some members of the Committee felt that the proposed design of the lobbies was too small, and that if enlarged they would serve the building much better and also help to mitigate any potential conflicts on Amber Street. In order to enlarge the residential lobbies, some parking spaces may have to be lost within the covered at-grade parking area.

**5. Off-Street Loading**

Members of the Committee and PCPC staff noted concerns about the location and layout of the proposed off-street loading spaces. The proposed configuration is difficult because it appears to only allow “back-in” unloading operations across a sidewalk. The two off-street loading spaces are also accessible by one single-bay door, essentially rendering them useful only as a single off-street loading space. In addition, the position of the off-street loading along Frankford Avenue is not ideal because of its higher pedestrian volume and adjacency to the retail spaces proposed as part of this development.

**6. Retail Storefront Design**

The Committee, staff, and the RCO representative noted that some elements of the storefront design would benefit from further development. Those elements include revisiting the mounting height of the awnings over the storefront and considering an option of recessed entries.

**7. Sustainability**

Committee members noted that the project would benefit from an effort to earn a third-party certification for sustainable design from an entity such as LEED. They agreed with staff comments that one way of achieving higher sustainability levels would be to implement a solar shading system that may reduce cooling load and increase the comfort of building occupants. In general, the Committee agreed that the project should

strive to implement some kind of sustainability standards that have more measurable benchmarks.

**8. General Comments**

The Committee echoed the concerns of the PCPC staff that some elements of the submission appeared underdeveloped. Some drawings were not coordinated with each other and some necessary construction details appeared to be missing. In addition, planting plans for the building's amenity terraces called for trees that in all likelihood would not thrive given the constraints of planting them in containers. Details of site fencing and any property gates were unable to be provided by the design team. Both the Committee and staff noted that the project would have benefited from an exploration in section and perspective concerning how this building relates to its neighboring houses across Amber Street.

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, nrt23@drexel.edu  
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**Re: Civic Design Review for 3600 Civic Center Blvd, University of Pennsylvania Health System Office Tower, Application No. 704092**

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 UPHS Office Tower, located at 3600 Civic Center Boulevard.

As proposed, the project will consist of offices, ground floor cafeteria and lobby space, and child care services. The tower will be built in two phases, and it will complete the planned build-out of the site. An existing multi-story parking garage on the parcel represents the first phase of the site design. The site is located between Health Sciences Drive, West Service Drive, and Civic Center Boulevard, and is zoned CMX-5.

At its meeting of August 2, 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. Outdoor Children's Play Area**

The CDR Committee asked for more details about both the material selection and the amount of natural light in the outdoor play area. The development team responded that the play area will be landscaped with natural plantings and will have a light color palette.

**2. Green Roof**

The CDR Committee asked the development team to consider allowing building users access to the green roof as an open space amenity. The development team confirmed that the green roof is currently designed for storm water mitigation only.

**3. Resolution of Grade Change along Civic Center Boulevard**

The Committee asked for further study of the interaction between the sloping sidewalk grade and the levels of both the lobby and cafeteria. A section through the two spaces would help to confirm that the interior activity of the seating areas can be seen from the exterior sidewalk level and that the transparency of the ground floor is impacted as little as possible.

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**4. Bicycle Parking**

The Committee asked for clarification about the bike parking that is being provided along the sidewalk for the proposed tower phase of this development. The bike parking that is being provided is a Zoning Code requirement, and the number of required spaces is being met by both the on-street spaces and the interior spaces that are within the existing adjacent parking garage (the completed first phase of the site's development).

**5. Public Accessibility of Ground Floor**

The Committee commended the development team for providing a ground floor space that is open to the public and that has a highly transparent façade. As noted above, the Committee requested that the relationship between indoor and outdoor grades along the sloping sidewalk be studied to be sure that indoor activity is visible from the exterior.

**6. Continue to work with RCO**

The development team, the RCO, and community members stated that they will continue to work together to communicate details about the proposal as the project moves forward.

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

cc: Nancy Rogo Trainer, Chair, Civic Design Review, nrt23@drexel.edu  
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**Re: Civic Design Review for 4514-22 Woodland Avenue, Application No. 688922**

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, dormitory development by the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia at 4514-22 Woodland Avenue.

As proposed, the 4514-22 Woodland Avenue project totals 128,482 square feet and will consist of ground floor retail, classrooms, and 218 dwelling units containing 426 beds. The site consists of a one-acre parcel that contains a vacant former elementary school, and is located between Woodland Avenue on the north, Saybrook Street on the south, the University of the Sciences campus buildings to the east, and South 46<sup>th</sup> Street on the west. The site is zoned RM-1. The proposal has been issued zoning refusals related to land use, loading, parking, signage, rear yard spaces, and height.

At its meeting of August 2, 2016, the Civic Design Review Committee voted to complete the Civic Design Review process and offered the following comments:

**1. RCO Comments**

The RCO representative felt satisfied that the questions and concerns raised by community members had been answered by the submitted proposal.

**2. Additional Height**

The additional height being requested for this project is a concern, especially in light of the fact that many structures that surround this site are two-story row houses. However, the development team noted that they worked closely with neighbors to look at the relationship between building height and open space, and that the community preferred additional publicly accessible open space to a lower building height. Committee members offered that the community will be receiving a beneficial, publicly-accessible space in return for the additional height of the proposed development.

**3. South 46<sup>th</sup> Street Ground Floor Storefronts**

The Committee supports the re-creation of the murals from the Wilson School, but also encourages architectural and graphic refinements at the ground floor wall that avoids a sense of "walking past a blank wall" along South 46<sup>th</sup> Street. Materials used at the ground floor

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should provide both translucency and transparency, allowing pedestrians to have a sense of the interior activities within the building. Classroom arrangements should allow for transparency along the street edge.

**4. Open Space**

The Committee commends the creation of welcoming open space that is open to the public.

**5. Acceptance of PCPC staff comments**

- a. Continue coordination with the Philadelphia Water Department to create “Green Street” storm water infrastructure on South 46<sup>th</sup> Street and Woodland Avenue;
- b. Architectural articulation and details of street facing facades are consistent with the scale and character of adjacent residential blocks;
- c. Consider the creation of additional bike parking spaces to serve the large student population using and/or residing in the facility;
- d. Consider creating a bike share station, in collaboration with OTIS, Philadelphia’s Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems;
- e. Welcomes the creation of storm water detention areas which are thoughtfully designed as beautification features with landscaping and plantings;
- f. The sustainable design submission is minimal. Additionally, PCPC staff has difficulty responding to sustainable design submissions for the “Green Globes” rating system, because the project rating does not begin its assessments until later project phases.

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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