



July 8, 2015

Gary J. Jastrzab
Executive Director

Alan Greenberger, FAIA
Chair

Joseph Synchron
Vice-Chair

Nancy Rogo Trainer, FAIA, AICP
Civic Design Review Chair

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

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

Re: Civic Design Review for 626-636 North 5th Street (Application No. 609388)

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 626-636 North 5th Street.

The project site is a large parcel on the northern part of a block bounded by 5th Street, Fairmount Avenue, and 6th Street, adjacent to a smaller parcel carved out along the 6th Street boundary at Fairmount Avenue. The site is zoned ICMX, and currently is occupied by a one-story industrial structure and surface parking lot.

The site is 1.01 acres in size, and the proposal is for a mixed-use development including multiple four-story residential buildings with roof decks. The proposal includes 43 residential units with 33 off-street parking spaces, totaling 104,241 square feet. The project is divided into several sets of rowhome-type structures, which include one unit per building and one corner mixed-use building including a single commercial space consisting of 1,467 square feet. Additionally, the site proposes an interior driveway providing access to each resident's parking garage and a private green space at the center of the block.

At its meeting of July 7, 2015, the Civic Design Review Committee offered these comments and voted to complete the CDR process. This project requires zoning use variances for multi-family household living and commercial uses as defined in the CMX-2 zoning classification, and will be presented at the City Planning Commission meeting of Tuesday, July 21, 2015, for a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The CDR Committee offered the following comments:

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1. Recommend removing one or both parking spaces along the North 5th Street entrance for pedestrian safety

The Committee noted that the proposed design for the entry along 5th Street presented conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles, and recommended the removal of one or both of the parking spaces, particularly the one on the northern side of the entry. In addition, the Committee noted that the cars would be highly visible from the street when parked, and that their location would present difficulties for emergency vehicles that may need to enter the site.

2. Design the interior garden to maximize visibility and preserve sight lines from one end of the garden to the other.

The Committee requested that in designing the landscape for the interior garden, the design team should maximize visibility across the garden from one end to the other. Any plant materials located at the garden entrance should not block views through the garden. In addition, the pedestrian entry to the garden should be as wide as possible. The van/accessible parking spot located at the far end of the garden is in a highly prominent location, and an effort to relocate or disguise it would be desirable.

3. Craftsmanship in detailing the facade materials

The Committee noted that, particularly with the proposed metal panels on the facade, strong architectural detailing will be paramount in achieving the right look and quality for the facades.

4. Consider replacing the interior drive asphalt pavement with pervious or unit pavers.

The convening RCO for the project (Northern Liberties Neighbors Association) requested that the developer and design team consider replacing the asphalt paving in the interior of the site with pervious pavement or unit pavers.

5. Confer with the Streets Department for review of proposed design.

The Committee echoed PCPC staff's recommendation that the developer seek input from the Streets Department regarding several aspects of the proposed design. This included verifying overhead clearances for emergency vehicles, verifying the placement of proposed street trees, confirming the proposed location of ADA sidewalk ramps, and confirming strategies for loading and trash storage within the site.

6. Emphasize the importance of the site entries along 5th and 6th Street.

The Committee noted that as entrances to the site for both pedestrians and motorists, the areas under the carriage units along 5th and 6th Streets are of high importance in terms of their designs. Adequate and aesthetically pleasing lighting designs are necessary, as is the avoidance of blind corners that could compromise the safety of pedestrians entering the site.

7. Strive to make the development more sustainable.

The Committee acknowledged the efforts of the design team to manage storm water runoff, and encouraged them to take additional steps to incorporate sustainable practices into the design of the structures on the site.

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 1213-41 N.5th Street (Application No. 614983)

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 1213-41 North 5th Street.

The block on which the project is proposed includes a large parcel at its northern end bounded by Thompson, North 5th, and Orkney Streets, and a property line to the south. The site is zoned ICMX and currently is a vacant lot.

The site is 0.9 acres in size, and the proposal is for multiple three-story residential buildings with one ground floor commercial space facing Thompson Street. The proposal includes 45 residential units totaling approximately 60,000 square feet, with 45 off-street parking spaces. The development project is divided into two sets of row home-type structures, which include two stacked units per building, and one corner mixed-use building including a single commercial space with residential units above.

At its meeting of July 7, 2015, the Civic Design Review Committee offered these comments and voted to complete the CDR process. This project requires zoning use variances for multi-family household living, as well as for required interior surface parking lot landscaping, and will be presented to the City Planning Commission meeting of Tuesday, July 21, 2015, for a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The CDR Committee offered the following comments:

1. **Discourage below grade dwelling units and confirm their habitability.**
The CDR Committee expressed concern about the living and bedroom spaces that would require egress wells, in particular those spaces that face 5th Street. The

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units would have less access to light and air, and the numerous grates over the window wells would make the public sidewalk less inviting to pedestrians. The Committee recommended reconsideration of the creation of below grade living spaces. If the units must be constructed in this configuration and at such depth, the Committee asked for confirmation that the design met building code requirements for safety, egress, and access to light and air.

2. Maximize the usability and size of the proposed dog park

The CDR Committee expressed agreement that the proposed dog park benefits the adjacent community, and will allow for the reduction of animal waste on the sidewalks of neighboring streets. However, the Committee also expressed concern with the noise that could be generated by the use of the dog park, as well as the potentially unfriendly appearance of any fence or hedge enclosing the park that would be taller than that normally allowed by code. The Committee recommended that the dog park be as accessible as possible for its use by neighbors, and that the development team consider increasing its size.

3. Landscaping on the site should meet minimum code requirements

The Committee noted that the site plan showed a lack of pervious and landscaped area. The current proposal seeks a variance for having less than the required amount of landscaping required by code. They encouraged the development team to meet the minimum code requirements for the required landscaped area.

4. RCO requests a warmer material palette

The convening RCO, Olde Kensington Neighborhood Association, requested the materials for the residential structures be more reflective of the range of building material colors and texture found on adjacent blocks.

5. Construction staging and concerns with pedestrian access

The Committee noted that a construction project on an adjacent site is due to begin soon, and expressed concern that adequate pedestrian access and safety be provided while these projects are under construction. The Committee requested that an adequate safety and access plan be prepared for construction staging, and that ongoing coordination efforts be maintained with neighborhood organizations.

6. Incorporation of PCPC Staff Comments

The Committee agreed on the incorporation of Philadelphia City Planning Commission Staff comments in its findings. These include:

- a. The site plan enhances the public realm by restoring the street wall, placing automobile circulation within the block, and by providing stormwater tree trenches that provides stormwater mitigation and additional landscaping opportunities.

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- b. That the proposed design remove or reduce sidewalk encroachments on North 5th Street, and insure that a continuous linear walking zone of 6'-6", the Complete Streets minimum for this class of street, be maintained.
- c. Confirm that loading, trash storage, and trash collection do not impose a burden on the public rights of way. The applicant should consider an off-street loading zone.

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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