



August 6, 2019

Ms. Christine Quinn  
Permit Services, Licenses and Inspections  
Municipal Services Building, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

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*Executive Director*

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Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 2005, 2011-21 N Howard Street (Application No. 950017)**

Dear Ms. Quinn:

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 mixed-use development at 2005, 2011-21 N Howard Street.

The mid-block parcel is bound by N Howard Street to the west, and N Hope Street to the east, and is mid-block between Norris Street to the south and Diamond Street to the north. The proposal is within an IRMX zoning district and proposes eight artist (industrial) studios on the ground floor, totaling 3,476 square feet and 80 residential units on floors 2 through 4 totaling 40,229 square feet. The project is applying for passive house certification and has a number of sustainable design components including a series of solar arrays on the roof. The proposal also includes 26 “tucked under” parking spaces and two bicycle storage rooms. The project is by-right.

At the meeting of August 6, 2019, the CDR committee completed the Civic Design Review process and offered the following comments. These comments also include remarks from the first CDR meeting, which took place on July 2, 2019.

**Registered Community Organization (RCO) comments - Norris Square Community Alliance (NSCA)**

The RCO representative stated a series of concerns for the project as presented:

- The RCO representative, as well as several members of the community and CDR committee, were discouraged that many of their recommendations from the July 2, 2019 CDR meeting were not addressed in the project’s design.
- The RCO again requested that the project better respond to the neighborhood context. This includes materials chosen, as well as the density and lack of affordable housing and parking.
- The RCO representative requested that the entrances on Hope Street be recessed to alleviate any potential conflicts with the walking zone, as the sidewalk is very narrow.

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- Other concerns were also mentioned including a request for pedestrian safety measures, such as crosswalks or a street speed bump, increased street lighting, and clarification about trash operations.

### **CDR Committee**

Overall, the CDR committee members expressed concerns that were similar to the project's first review, and provided the following:

- There was consensus that the Hope Street sidewalk needs to better accommodate pedestrians. Some CDR members recommended that the building be set further back from the street line, and that bollards be added to the furnishing zone to prevent sidewalk parking. The committee requested that the project team rethink the site layout, starting with a more generous sidewalk width and working towards the interior of the site, therefore improving the public realm on Hope Street.
- PCPC staff and the committee also recommended recessing the entries on Hope Street, or lowering the floor base elevation, to eliminate the stoops. The number of stoops could potentially be reduced as an alternative.
- The committee also requested that the artist studios utilize storefront windows and add lighting, or other features, to increase the commercial and industrial character of the ground floor. A wider, specialty door may also benefit the function of the studio spaces.
- There was also conversation among some of the members that the material selection has an industrial appearance and fits within the neighborhood character, but the scale of the project seemed inappropriate.
- The committee praised the project for making modest improvements, but improvements nonetheless that potentially could make a significant impact on the public realm. For example, reducing the height of the opaque parapet walls and adding fenestration on the ground floor.
- The development team was commended for their "precedent setting" energy aspirations in their sustainable design approach, attempting to achieve passive house certification.

### **Acceptance of Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) staff comments**

The CDR committee accepted PCPC staff comments, which included:

- Concerns for the Hope Street sidewalk width
- Concerns with the bicycle storage and trash room access. The doors currently swing out into the 12' drive aisles, and there is limited accessibility to the trash rooms for residential units. Staff encouraged relocating the entrances to both sets of rooms. The development team responded that the bike room door could be adjusted.
- Staff recommended adjusting the ground floor ceiling height to better match an industrial or commercial character and to consider incorporating more storefront windows along the ground floor units.

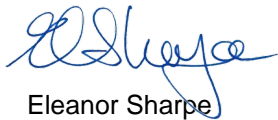
PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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CIVIC DESIGN REVIEW

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,



Eleanor Sharpe  
Executive Director

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