



January 6, 2021

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

Eleanor Sharpe  
*Executive Director*

Michael Johns, AIA, NOMA, LEED-AP  
*Civic Design Review Chair*

Daniel K. Garofalo  
*Civic Design Review Vice-Chair*

Leonidas Addimando  
Ashley Di Caro, LEED -AP  
Tavis Dockwiller, RLA  
Nancy Rogo Trainer, FAIA, AICP  
Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 1201 W Girard Avenue  
(Application No. ZP-2020-006957)**

Dear Ana,

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 development at **1201 W Girard Avenue**.

This proposal is to build an apartment building on a parcel currently used as a retail pharmacy. The site is zoned RM-1, is 45,998 square feet, and no variances will be required. The applicant proposes 166 dwelling units and 31 vehicle parking spaces for a total gross floor area of 117,960 square feet.

The CDR Committee first reviewed this proposal on December 10, 2020 and asked the applicant to return for a second review. At its second review meeting on January 5, 2021, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**1. RCO Comments:**

Representatives from Yorktown Community Development Corporation attended and offered the following comments:

Overall, the RCO believed that the proposal is too dense for the site and does not reflect their neighborhood's character. They preferred for the building to be no more than three stories, be reoriented so the parking lot is on Girard Avenue, and be redesigned to include ground floor commercial spaces.

**2. CDR Committee Comments:**

At the meeting, the CDR Committee offered the following comments:

The Committee believed that the applicant's design could improve by activating the ground floor with commercial spaces, public spaces, or both. Their strong preference was for commercial spaces on both the 12<sup>th</sup> and Girard and 13<sup>th</sup> and Girard corners of the building.

One Parkway Building  
1515 Arch St.  
13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

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

[www.phila.gov/cityplanning](http://www.phila.gov/cityplanning)



They spoke about Girard Avenue as a major east-west street and believed that the design of the proposal did not reflect this. They referred to a recent proposal on Washington Avenue, designed by this project's architects, as an example to emulate in terms of consideration of community feedback for the public realm (2401 Washington Avenue).

The Committee believed that the building needed to allow robust interaction between residents within the building and the people and environment on the outside. To do this, they wanted to see more of an effort to open the ground floor to active use along Girard, 12th, and 13th Streets, or to step the ground floor of the building so that apartment windows are close enough to grade to afford interaction.

While the applicant will not be able to plant trees on the Girard Avenue sidewalk due to an underground utility line, the Committee asked the applicant to enlarge the proposed planters and increase the number of them.

The Committee suggested that the traffic could be managed differently, possibly by designing the parking lot to be one-way in and one-way out.

They also asked that the building be broken up vertically along Girard Avenue and commented on the building's façade materials.

They asked the applicant to continue working with Yorktown's residents to refine the proposal.

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

cc: Michael Johns, FAIA, Chair, Civic Design Review Committee, [mdesigns@msn.com](mailto:mdesigns@msn.com)  
Daniel K. Garofalo, Vice-Chair, Civic Design Review Committee, [dkgarofalo@gmail.com](mailto:dkgarofalo@gmail.com)  
Council President Darrell Clarke, [darrell.clarke@phila.gov](mailto:darrell.clarke@phila.gov)  
Mary Jones, Legislative Assistant, [mary.jones@phila.gov](mailto:mary.jones@phila.gov)  
Corey Bell, Constituent Services Representative, [corey.bell@phila.gov](mailto:corey.bell@phila.gov)  
Agata Reister, Landmark Architectural Design, [agata@landmarkaia.com](mailto:agata@landmarkaia.com)  
Rochelle Johnson, Yorktown CDC, [rochellej926@gmail.com](mailto:rochellej926@gmail.com)  
Barbara Pennock, West Girard Progress, [bjchavous@gmail.com](mailto:bjchavous@gmail.com)  
Jacob Peck, Yorktown 2035, [jacobphl@icloud.com](mailto:jacobphl@icloud.com)  
Peter Crawford, Temple Area Property Association, [peter@crawfordgroup.org](mailto:peter@crawfordgroup.org)  
Diane Monroe, 14th Democratic Executive Committee, [diana.davis@comcast.net](mailto:diana.davis@comcast.net)



David Fecteau, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, [david.fecteau@phila.gov](mailto:david.fecteau@phila.gov)

Michelle Brisbon, Streets Department, [michelle.brisbon@phila.gov](mailto:michelle.brisbon@phila.gov)

Kisha Duckett, Streets Department, [kisha.duckett@phila.gov](mailto:kisha.duckett@phila.gov)

Jeanien Wilson, Streets Department, [jeanien.wilson@phila.gov](mailto:jeanien.wilson@phila.gov)

Casey Ross, Office of Transportation, Infrastructure and Sustainability, [casey.ross@phila.gov](mailto:casey.ross@phila.gov)

Jennifer Dougherty, SEPTA Long Range Planning, [jdougherty@septa.org](mailto:jdougherty@septa.org)

Paula Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, [paula.brumbelow@phila.gov](mailto:paula.brumbelow@phila.gov)



January 11, 2021

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

Eleanor Sharpe  
*Executive Director*

Michael Johns, AIA, NOMA, LEED-AP  
*Civic Design Review Chair*

Daniel K. Garofalo  
*Civic Design Review Vice-Chair*

Leonidas Addimando  
Ashley Di Caro, LEED -AP  
Tavis Dockwiller, RLA  
Nancy Rogo Trainer, FAIA, AICP  
Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 2621-67 Frankford Ave,  
(Application No. ZP-2020-006897)**

Dear Ms. Dahal,

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 development at **2621-67 Frankford Avenue**.

This proposal is for total of 424,347.5 square feet of new construction. There is currently an industrial building on the site as well as a lumber yard. The applicant proposes total of 460 residential units along with 36,242 square feet of artist studios on the ground floor, 120 interior parking spaces and 237 bicycle parking spaces. The site is zoned IRMX, and it is within the North Delaware Avenue NCA. There are no zoning variances required for this proposal.

At its meeting of January 5, 2021, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**1. RCO Comments- East Kensington Neighbors Association (EKNA):**

The RCO representative mentioned that this was the second time this site was being heard at CDR (but with a new design proposal) and because of the prominence of the site, the community had been following its development direction. The RCO then explained that the community supported the initial rezoning of the site to accommodate higher density residential uses and had been supportive of this proposal overall. The only concern was what the ground floor artist studio spaces would eventually be utilized for, whether they would continue to activate the ground floor, or if the space would ultimately be converted to residential uses.

**2. RCO Comments- Fishtown Kensington Area Business Improvement District:**

The RCO representative mentioned that the community as well as the RCO zoning committee had been supportive of this project and she brought up the same concern as EKNA regarding the artist studios eventual function and design layout, especially the larger ones.

One Parkway Building  
1515 Arch St.  
13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

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

[www.phila.gov/cityplanning](http://www.phila.gov/cityplanning)



### 3. CDR Committee Comments:

The CDR Committee acknowledged that the development team has a good relationship with the community and appreciated both parties' efforts to develop the relationship. One committee member appreciated that people could enter the building in variety of different ways ranging from public to private. The committee believed that this proposal could be a great asset for the neighborhood, the design truly fit its context, the material choices were simple and appropriate, and the scale was respectful of its surrounding area.

In addition, the Committee noted the following comments for the project:

The Committee noted there were some "rigid" spaces in this plan which could be better enlivened. Courtyard Three, for example needed more green space and its entrance did not appear to be open to the public. The Committee member then mentioned that it was unfortunate that the parking garage entrance could not move to the corner, as had been suggested in the staff comments, but nevertheless there could still be design improvements made that would make the courtyard more inviting for the public.

One of the Committee members echoed the staff comment suggesting more varied and flexible entrance doors to the artists studios. In response, the development team mentioned they would continue to work on the entrances to provide maximum flexibility for these spaces. The proposed loading zones contribute to that goal as well.

Access to public transit was also mentioned. The committee suggested that improving access to the two nearby corner bus stops should be further analyzed, especially looking at access points from the internal courtyards. Modifications of building exits can also be reviewed to provide the most direct routes to nearby Market-Frankford line stations.

The CDR Committee suggested that the dog park be open to the public as an amenity to the neighborhood. Another Committee member observed that the plant types next to the dog park would be hard to maintain. It was also discussed that the fence on Amber street might convey the idea that the space is closed to the public, and in case of public events, the fence type should be reconsidered to appear welcoming. Examples of welcoming open space entrances around Philadelphia and New York City were mentioned. One of the Committee members suggested that long linear tree pits be installed in order to better support healthy and robust trees. The Committee then discussed the potential of the flat roof to incorporating photovoltaic panels because of its size and exposure to sun.

The Committee also recommended incorporating staff comments including:

- a. Staff appreciates the development team's effort in creating an enhanced pedestrian experience with addition of open and green spaces ranging from public to private.
- b. Three curb cuts on Frankford Avenue interfere with pedestrian movement on the sidewalk. Staff recommends consolidating the curb



cuts into two and moving the parking garage entrance to the corner. Doing so, would create a great opportunity to provide a more encouraging and welcoming entrance to “courtyard three” which is designed for the public.

- c. Staff is concerned about the health of the vegetation inside the courtyard and underneath the entrances on Amber Street with limited sunlight.
- d. Staff is concerned about the buffer between the residential units as well as the outdoor amenity space and the adjacent gas station. Staff recommends addition of a planted buffer along this side and set the building further back to mitigate the air quality issues for the residents and users of the outdoor amenity space. Moreover, staff encourages the development team to continue conversations with the gas station owner to plant trees in the existing buffer.
- e. Staff commends the development team for activating the ground floor level with addition of storefronts and active uses on both Frankford Avenue and Amber Street. Staff supports the building composition and patterns conforming with the industrial and mixed-use character of the surrounding area.
- f. Staff requests some clarity on the interior layout of the artists studios. While the multiple entry points could offer a strong connection to the public, the feasibility of the remaining workspace with so many active doors is not clear.
- g. Staff encourages the development team to consider a greater variety of door types to provide flexibility to accommodate different types of artists spaces.
- h. Staff commends the development team for locating all the parking underground.
- i. Staff appreciates the inclusion of bike parking in the basement, however, suggests considering a more accessible ground floor location if possible.
- j. Staff appreciates the development team for meeting so many sustainable design metrics and encourages a project of this scale and visibility to go above and beyond the code.
- k. Staff encourages the development team to follow up with SEPTA about potential of bus stops and shelters given the size of the development.

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

cc: Michael Johns, Chair, Civic Design Review, [mdesigns@msn.com](mailto:mdesigns@msn.com)  
Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, [dkgarofalo@gmail.com](mailto:dkgarofalo@gmail.com)  
Councilmember Mark Squilla, Council District 1, [Mark.squilla@phila.gov](mailto:Mark.squilla@phila.gov)  
Sean McMonagle, Legislative Assistant, [sean.mcmonagle@phila.gov](mailto:sean.mcmonagle@phila.gov)  
Madison Gould, East Kensington Neighbors Association, [info@ekna.org](mailto:info@ekna.org)  
Marc Collazzo, Fishtown Kensington Area Business Improvement District, [marc@fishtownbid.org](mailto:marc@fishtownbid.org)  
Jessica Hoffman, New Kensington Community Development Corp, [jhoffman@nkcfdc.org](mailto:jhoffman@nkcfdc.org)  
Rustin Ohler, Harman Deutsch Ohler Architecture, [Rustin@HDOArch.com](mailto:Rustin@HDOArch.com)  
Katherine E. Missimer, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP, [Kmissimer@klehr.com](mailto:Kmissimer@klehr.com)  
David Fecteau, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, [David.fecteau@phila.gov](mailto:David.fecteau@phila.gov)  
Cheli Dahal, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections, [Cheli.R.Dahal@phila.gov](mailto:Cheli.R.Dahal@phila.gov)  
Michelle Brisbon, Streets Department, [michelle.brisbon@phila.gov](mailto:michelle.brisbon@phila.gov)  
Kisha Duckett, Streets Department, [kisha.duckett@phila.gov](mailto:kisha.duckett@phila.gov)  
Jeanien Wilson, Streets Department, [jeanien.wilson@phila.gov](mailto:jeanien.wilson@phila.gov)  
Casey Ross, Office of Transportation, Infrastructure and Sustainability, [casey.ross@phila.gov](mailto:casey.ross@phila.gov)  
Jennifer Dougherty, SEPTA Long Range Planning, [jdougherty@septa.org](mailto:jdougherty@septa.org)  
Paula Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, [paula.brumbelow@phila.gov](mailto:paula.brumbelow@phila.gov)