



March 2, 2021

Cheli Dahal  
Department of Licenses and Inspections  
Municipal Services Building, Concourse  
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Eleanor Sharpe  
*Executive Director*

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

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

Leonidas Addimando  
Ashley Di Caro, LEED -AP  
Tavis Dockwiler, RLA  
Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 123-27 S 12th Street, (Application #ZP-2020-006315C)**

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 **123-27 S 12th Street**.

The proposal is for a 20-story mixed-use building containing 412 dwelling units –on floors 2-20, 11,300 square feet of commercial / retail space on the ground floor, 94 underground vehicular parking spaces, and 138 bicycle parking spaces. The parcel is zoned CMX-5 making this a by-right proposal.

At its meeting of March 2, 2021, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**1. RCO Comments**

Washington Square West Civic Association was the coordinating RCO for this project. They held a virtual public meeting on January 26, 2021 and provided the following comments.

The representative from the Washington Square West Civic Association noted that the RCO has seen multiple proposals for this site and that is the best proposal seen to date. In addition, the RCO feels this design is superior to previous proposals because all curb cuts are proposed for Sansom Street as opposed to 12th Street (the current condition).

In order to improve the project, the RCO suggested that lighting be added to both Moravian and Jessup Streets and that the applicant coordinate with adjacent properties to address the number of dumpsters currently on Moravian Street. The RCO also encouraged deeper ground floor setbacks / operable storefront windows to increase sidewalk dining opportunities. The RCO agreed with staff recommendation to add more storefront to the Moravian Street elevation.

Lastly, the RCO expressed their concern with the number of development proposals in the vicinity of this project and requested that the applicant coordinate construction with Civic Association and adjacent properties.

**2. CDR Committee Comments**

The Civic Design Review Committee had numerous positive public realm comments, noting that the project proposes many admirable design features.

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)



Members of the Civic Design Review Committee expressed their appreciation that the development team and RCO have worked well together in advance of the CDR meeting.

In agreement with staff comments and the RCO, members of the Civic Design Review Committee encouraged the applicant to make the ground floor as permeable as possible. In order to improve the project, the applicants were encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to address urban heat island effect through shade, greening, and efficient HVAC equipment and to consider working with neighboring businesses to deal with dumpster issue on Moravian Street.

Lastly, the Civic Design Review committee expressed their agreement with the staff comment pertaining to the lack of articulation on the east façade of the tower. The development team attributed this to code considerations due to the narrow width of Jessup 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,

Eleanor Sharpe  
Executive Director

cc: Michael Johns, Chair, Civic Design Review, [mdesigns@msn.com](mailto:mdesigns@msn.com)  
Daniel K. Garofalo, Vice-Chair, Civic Design Review Committee, [dkgarofalo@gmail.com](mailto:dkgarofalo@gmail.com)  
Councilmember Mark Squilla, [mark.squilla@phila.gov](mailto:mark.squilla@phila.gov)  
Sean McMonagle, Legislative Assistant, [sean.mcmonagle@phila.gov](mailto:sean.mcmonagle@phila.gov)  
Ron Patterson, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP, [rpatterson@klehr.com](mailto:rpatterson@klehr.com)  
Ashton Allan, AIA, Studios Architecture, [aallan@studios.com](mailto:aallan@studios.com)  
Eric M. Rahe, AIA, LEED AP, BLT Architects, [emr@blta.com](mailto:emr@blta.com)  
George Hayward, Greystar, [george.hayward@greystar.com](mailto:george.hayward@greystar.com)  
Mike Cibik, 5th Ward Republican RCO, [macam@ccpplaw.com](mailto:macam@ccpplaw.com)  
Jonathan Broh, Washington Square West Civic Association, [zoning@washwestcivic.org](mailto:zoning@washwestcivic.org)  
Ian Litwin, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, [ian.litwin@phila.gov](mailto:ian.litwin@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)



March 4, 2021

Reeba Babu  
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 Dockwiler, RLA  
Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 1324 Allegheny Avenue  
(Application No. CP-2020-005561)**

Dear Ms. Babu,

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 **1324 Allegheny Avenue**.

This proposal is to build a mixed-use residential building on a parcel that has three rowhomes and associated vacant land that faces N Park Avenue to the east, Allegheny Avenue to the north, a service alley to the west and private parcels to the south. The project will contain 70 residential units, 17 vehicular parking spaces, and 4,438 square feet of commercial space.

At its meeting of March 2, 2021, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**1. 12<sup>th</sup> and Cambria Registered Community Organization (RCO) Comments:**

A representative from the RCO offered the following comments:

There is not enough parking on site for this project. 17 underground spaces is not enough for 70 dwelling units. The development team had stated that they would have another meeting in February with the community to discuss the project, but that did not happen. This causes a lot of concern in the community.

**2. North Central Philadelphia Susquehanna Community Development Corporation (RCO) Comments:**

A representative from the RCO offered the following comments:

The rules and regulations of the Civic Design Review process are not being followed and the applicant did not meet the requirements to come to the March 2, 2021 meeting. Additionally the applicant did not provide adequate notice to the RCOs or the community of today's Civic Design Review. They request that this Civic Design Review meeting be stricken from the record. They also want to know how the Planning Commission validates that

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)



community meetings were held properly and that the notification process was followed when the correct information was not sent out to the neighborhood. They request a meeting with the Planning Commission to discuss these questions.

There are concerns with several aspects of the project's development and design and how it will impact the community. Specific concerns include:

**Demolition and Air Handling Units – Dust and Noise**

The developer is handling the demolition of existing structures in a way that hurts the community. They work long hours from early morning to late at night and there is dust and noise. There is also a concern with the large number HVAC/Air handling units on the roof(70 units) and the noise they will generate, impacting the neighborhood. The RCO requests a study of noise impacts.

**Site Design**

The community is losing N Park Avenue as a play street due to the curb cut for the parking garage. They request a traffic study be performed to study the impacts of the development and they urge the relocation of the curb cut and garage entry to the alley on the eastern side of the project. They also request that any bike racks be placed within the applicant's property rather on the sidewalk. They wish to make sure that the project reduces impacts on the community's use of the sidewalks.

**Building Design**

The renderings could have been done in a better way, they do not clearly communicate to the community and they do not meet the community's needs and goals. The RCO requests solar shadow studies to see the impact of the project on the community and they also want to see more design changes so that the building fits into the historical context of the neighborhood.

The RCO also affirms to add their comments from the January 5, 2021 Civic Design Review of this address. These include:

**Concerns with legitimacy of January 5, 2021 Civic Design Review**

The RCO meeting of November 19, 2020 should not count towards meeting the Civic Design Review requirements. The notifications for the meeting lacked all of the links needed to access it resulting in violations of Title 14 of the Philadelphia Code and title 2 of the American with Disabilities Act. As a result, the Civic Design Review of January 5, 2021 should not count as a legitimate review in the process. Additionally, attempts to have another meeting in December were rushed by the developer and did not consider the community's inability to meet during the busy holiday season.

**3. Swampoodle Neighborhood Parcels Association (RCO) Comments:**

A representative from the RCO offered the following comments:

There were problems with following the requirements of the Civic Design Review process. The community meeting notices were not compliant with the Philadelphia Zoning Code. The meeting held on November 19, 2020 was not



a legitimate meeting. The public was not permitted to attend the meeting due to virtual meeting details being omitted from the legal notice. The developer stated that another community meeting would be held in February before the second Civic Design Review, but that community meeting was not scheduled. The applicant did not do enough to inform the RCOs or the neighbors of either Civic Design Review meeting date and time (The January 5, 2021 meeting or the March 2, 2021 meeting). The RCO needs Civic Design Review to recognize and address that the notice requirements have not been followed.

Additionally, the communication with the affected RCOs and affected addresses have been disrespectful and have included numerous misstatements by the applicant. At the meeting of January 28, 2021 the community offered substantial changes to the design and no changes were made and no amended drawings were sent to the RCOs for their information.

There are concerns with several aspects of the project's development and design and how it will impact the community. Specific concerns include:

### **Building Design**

The RCO likes the commercial corner of the building and wide sidewalks on Allegheny Avenue. They would encourage fewer trees or the design team to find other places to plant them to create a wider sidewalk. The RCO does not like the reduction in the amount of brick shown in the earlier scheme presented on January 5, 2021 but agrees with the choice of sea green for the metal panels. Additionally, they do not know what all of the building materials are in the drawings and want more information.

The building is too tall and the height needs to be reduced. There should be fewer floors, 3-4 floors is recommended which is typical on Allegheny Avenue in the multi-family districts. There should also be more setbacks, especially from Allegheny Avenue, to reduce the impacts of the massing. The design proposes a dormitory/boarding house design and is not appropriate for the family-living neighborhood. The RCO requests solar shadow studies, especially since the height and mass of the building is out of character with the neighborhood.

The HVAC design seems strange, why are there 70 units on the roof near the Park Avenue homes? And won't that disturb the neighborhood with noise and humming? The RCO requests an engineering study of the noise to understand its affect on the Park Avenue Homes.

### **Site Design**

The RCO would like to see geotechnical and earth movement studies to understand the impacts of the project. There are concerns with the curb cut design for the garage. The RCO also wants to know how the design will prevent cars coming from the McDonald's from driving on the pavement and sidewalks. Additionally, all bike racks should be within the property line and not on the sidewalk.

The RCO has concerns with how the neighborhood could be impacted if the McDonald's is demolished and redeveloped, especially since the



applicant seemed to talk about the site at the last RCO meeting. During the CDR meeting on March 2, the applicant stated that the scope of their work does not include the McDonald's and they have no interest in that site. However, the RCO wants to make it clear that nothing should not happen on that site without community input.

The RCO also affirms to add their comments from the January 5, 2021 Civic Design Review of this address. These include:

**Concerns with legitimacy of January 5, 2021 Civic Design Review**

The RCO believes that this CDR meeting (on January 5) is not being held legally. A real community meeting needs to be held for the project to move forward. There was no properly noticed RCO meeting (on November 19), Residents with disabilities did not receive a notice that informed them about the virtual RCO meeting in a manner that let them join it. Only three of the six RCOs for this address could get into the virtual RCO meeting and the applicant, not the RCOs, has a responsibility to for making sure that access works.

The development team could not know what the design comments were of affected residents since they were unable to attend. They could not make comments about how the design would affect the environment where they live. This Civic Design Review meeting (on January 5) should not be held and no votes should be taken.

**4. CDR Committee Comments:**

At the meeting, the CDR Committee offered the following comments, which include Planning Commission staff observations adopted by the CDR committee.

The committee always encourages better communication between the development team and the community that leads to an earnest addressing of community concerns. In this instance, some community concerns do not seem to be addressed, which is troublesome for the committee. Even though a project is by-right, developers should make sure that they work closely with the community. If not, a new development is a detriment to those that live there.

The committee has to review projects that are sent to it by the Planning Commission and encourages the community to reach to out the Planning Commission with any additional questions on the process.

**Site Design and Building Design**

The committee appreciates the use of underground parking, which is not usually seen in this neighborhood. It is good to get it off the street. The committee also encourages all applicable City agencies to work with the applicant and the community to explore the uses, design, and programs for the broad Allegheny Avenue easement. The committee supports the changes to the brick detailing on the western façade but also encourages the applicant to consider additional architectural devices, details, and



refinements that could help the project complement the lower scale and different character of adjacent rowhomes to the east.

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 Darrell Clarke, [darrell.clarke@phila.gov](mailto:darrell.clarke@phila.gov)  
Corey Bell, Constituent Services Representative, [corey.bell@phila.gov](mailto:corey.bell@phila.gov)  
Sergio Coscia, Coscia Moos, [scoscia@cosciamoos.com](mailto:scoscia@cosciamoos.com)  
Rachel Pritzker, attorney, [rachael@pritzkerlg.com](mailto:rachael@pritzkerlg.com)  
Tinamarie Russell, North Central Philadelphia Susquehanna Community Development Corporation, [info@ncpcdc.org](mailto:info@ncpcdc.org)  
Norman Wooten, 12<sup>th</sup> and Cambria Advisory Board, [Rangesssab1@outlook.com](mailto:Rangesssab1@outlook.com)  
Martin A Strom, 43<sup>rd</sup> Democratic Ward, [mstrom011@gmail.com](mailto:mstrom011@gmail.com)  
Dwayne Lilley, Upper North Neighbors Association, [dwlilley980@gmail.com](mailto:dwlilley980@gmail.com)  
Charles Lanier, Hunting Park Neighborhood Advisory Committee, [hunting.parknac@verizon.net](mailto:hunting.parknac@verizon.net)  
Adrienn Fernandez, Swampoodle Neighborhood Parcels Association, [swampoodleneighborhoodparcels@gmail.com](mailto:swampoodleneighborhoodparcels@gmail.com)  
Ariel Diliberto, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, [ariel.diliberto@phila.gov](mailto:ariel.diliberto@phila.gov)  
Reeba Babu, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections, [reeba.babu@phila.gov](mailto:reeba.babu@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)



March 8, 2021

Mr. Paulose Issac  
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, FAIA, 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  
Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 2400 E Huntingdon Street (App. No. 1055337)**

Dear Mr. Issac:

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 **2400 E Huntingdon Street**.

The proposal is for a seven-story mixed use building with nearly 12,000 square feet of ground floor industrial space, including a 5,200 square foot fresh food market as a portion of this space, and 150 residential units on floors 2-7. Two levels of underground parking with 90 automobile spaces and 50 bicycle spaces are proposed below. This project has no zoning variances and is by-right, though it does rely upon bonuses for the fresh food market and payment into the City fund in support of mixed income housing.

The Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process at its meeting of March 2, 2021, following an initial review January 5, 2021. However, conclusion of this process should not be misconstrued as acceptance of what is being proposed. The Committee offered the following comments:

**1. RCO Comments**

Michael Manfroni of the Olde Richmond Civic Organization (ORCA) offered targeted criticism of both development team and the project itself. Mr. Manfroni described the proposal as rushed, infeasible, and completely out of scale with the community context. He spoke to the developer's continued disrespect toward the wishes of the community throughout the attempted outreach process. He articulated issues with the intent versus application of the IRMX zoning assigned to this parcel, the fresh food bonus, and a CDR process that cannot ameliorate by-right projects that do not wish to meaningfully engage and improve. The demolition of the existing warehouse, while not historically designated, was cited as an avoidable loss to the community and a missed opportunity for adaptive reuse.

**2. Councilperson Comments**

Councilperson Squilla attended the meeting to express his displeasure for the proposal and his support of the community in fighting it. He went so far as to offer to locate an alternate buyer for the site to avoid this proposal being realized as currently designed. He reiterated the concerns expressed by ORCA regarding the scale of the proposal and the need for an approach that better fits the community context. He

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

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

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also spoke to the elimination of the fresh food bonus because of projects of this caliber.

### 3. CDR Committee Comments

The CDR Committee was greatly disappointed with the lack of improvement in this proposal and regretted that the team so openly disregarded the opportunity to be more responsive to the community or to address accurate criticisms. The proposal was found lacking in terms of the building and the substandard drawings used to communicate it. The scale remains massive and out of context with the community, with greater setbacks suggested at a minimum though a fundamental rethinking was strongly encouraged. Many questions remained unaddressed that were brought up in the first review, including the need for a feasible turning diagram for cars and trucks, a realistic landscape plan, and concerns about ill-conceived emergency egress points.

Overall, “disgusting, ridiculous,” and “a travesty” were all used to describe the proposal and the team’s engagement processes. The Committee commended the spirit, commitment, and involvement of the community participating in the CDR process as the only positive component of 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, Chair, Civic Design Review, mdesigns@msn.com  
Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, dkgarofalo@gmail.com  
Michelle Brisbon, Streets Department, michelle.brisbon@phila.gov  
Kisha Duckett, Streets Department, kisha.duckett@phila.gov  
Jeanien Wilson, Streets Department, jeanien.wilson@phila.gov  
Casey Ross, Office of Transportation, Infrastructure and Sustainability, casey.ross@phila.gov  
Jennifer Dougherty, SEPTA Long Range Planning, jdougherty@septa.org  
Paula Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, paula.brumbelow@phila.gov  
Councilmember Mark Squilla, mark.squilla@phila.gov



Department of Planning and Development

## Civic Design Review

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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Sean McMonagle, Legislative Assistant to Councilmember,  
sean.mcmonagle@phila.gov

Hu Kang, KCA Design Associates, hukang77@gmail.com

Meredith Ferleger, Dilworth Paxson, mferleger@dilworthlaw.com

Michael Manfroni, Olde Richmond Civic Association,  
michaelmanfroni@gmail.com

Jessica Hoffman, New Kensington Community Development Corp,  
jhoffman@nkcdc.org

Gregory Waldman, Philadelphia City Planning Commission,  
gregory.waldman@phila.gov

Paulose Issac, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections,  
paulose.issac@phila.gov



March 8, 2021

Mr. Jeffrey Tan  
Department of Licenses and Inspections  
Municipal Services Building, Concourse  
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Eleanor Sharpe  
*Executive Director*

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

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

Leonidas Addimando  
Ashley Di Caro, LEED -AP  
Tavis Dockwiler, RLA  
Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 2740 Amber Street (App No. ZP-2020-004012)**

Dear Mr. Tan:

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 residential development at **2740 Amber Street**.

The proposal includes 132 units of residential (90,282 square feet) divided between two principal structures with 42 automobile parking spaces at the ground level. The volume facing Silver Street is 6 stories while the volume facing Amber and Seltzer Street is 3 stories. A lobby space, community room, pool roof decks, and roof garden are also proposed. This project requires zoning variances for height, number of principal structures, and lack of rear yards and a hearing is scheduled for March 10, 2021.

This project was asked to return following a first meeting December 10, 2020. At its meeting of March 2, 2021, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**1. RCO Comments**

There was no RCO in attendance for this project during the March 2, 2021 CDR Meeting.

**2. CDR Committee Comments**

The CDR Committee was generally very appreciative of the changes that had been made to the project and the attention that was given to the comments from the first review. The ground floor reconfiguration, increased activity on Amber and Seltzer Streets, and the reduced building scale facing residential properties were each specifically noted. While the new layout is less car-focused, the Committee asked the team to consider more features in the parking area, such as trees, planters, or benches, which would allow it to serve more as park for visitors than parking for cars. The team was encouraged to continue to push for a more generous walking zone on Seltzer Street and to include a greater diversity of landscape elements with thoughtful consideration for the maintenance and species variety to ensure success. The Committee commended the team on the proposal for on-site affordable units and expressed hope that these would become a reality.

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)



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  
Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, dkgarofalo@gmail.com  
Michelle Brisbon, Streets Department, michelle.brisbon@phila.gov  
Kisha Duckett, Streets Department, kisha.duckett@phila.gov  
Jeanien Wilson, Streets Department, jeanien.wilson@phila.gov  
Casey Ross, Office of Transportation, Infrastructure and Sustainability, casey.ross@phila.gov  
Jennifer Dougherty, SEPTA Long Range Planning, jdougherty@septa.org  
Paula Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, paula.brumbelow@phila.gov  
Councilmember Mark Squilla, mark.squilla@phila.gov  
Sean McMonagle, Legislative Assistant to Councilmember, sean.mcmonagle@phila.gov  
Anthony Tsirantonakis, T+ Associates Architects, anthonyt@t-associates.net  
Nicholas Fury, Somerset Neighbors for Better Living, snblzoning@gmail.com  
John Kalicki, South Port Richmond Civic Association, zoning@sopocivic.org  
Ken Paul, Port Richmond On Patrol & Civic Association (PROPAC), propac19134@gmail.com  
Rolando Sanchez, Impact Community Development Corporation, rsanchez@impactservices.org  
Jessica Hoffman, New Kensington Community Development Corp, jhoffman@nkcdc.org  
Gregory Waldman, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, gregory.waldman@phila.gov  
Jeffrey Tan, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections, jeffrey.tan@phila.gov



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Department of Licenses and Inspections  
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Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 4701 Kingsessing Avenue (Application #ZP-2020-004939)**

Dear Ms. Babu,

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 residential development at **4701-15 Kingsessing Avenue**.

The proposal is for a four-story, multi-family building with 81 residential units, totaling 68,425 square feet. The building proposes 45 new parking spaces, which are to be combined with 40 existing parking spaces for a total of 85 spaces. The proposed building also includes 1,270 square feet of amenity space and a publicly accessible courtyard. This project has a number of zoning and use variances, as the proposed multifamily project is currently zoned RTA-1.

At its meeting of March 2, 2021, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**RCO Comments: Three RCOs attended the CDR meeting and provided the following comments:**

**1. Southwest Philadelphia District Services (SWPDS)**

The RCO representative noted they support the public comments they received during the RCO meeting, specifically mentioning that this project has four use refusals, and three dimensional refusals. The RCO representative requested that the applicant meet the requirements of the zoning classification of RTA-1. The RCO member noted that they have had several meetings, but have concerns with the applicant not being transparent about the project.

The RCO representative noted during the RCO meeting that 21 people spoke to the project. 17 people were not supportive of the project and four members of the public were in support, but three of the four people in support mentioned they do not live in the community. The RCO representative noted that this project's ZBA hearing is scheduled for April 7, and mentioned they will have another community meeting for ZBA specific concerns

Finally, the RCO representative noted that too many people will be negatively impacted by this project in its current form.

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

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

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## **2. West Philly United Neighbors (WPUN)**

The WPUN representative noted that their comments were reflective and consistent with the public's comments in several RCO meetings, specifically noting support of the community concerns regarding the proposed height and massing of the building. The RCO noted that all three zoning classifications (RTA-1, CMX-2, RM-1) have height limits of 38' and this project is too tall at 47'. The RCO representative noted concerns with the lack of parking and noted that the current proposal does not align with the context and character of the neighborhood. The RCO representative noted that the development's attorney has been professional throughout the CDR process and thanked him for the continuous communication.

The RCO representative commended the community for providing the design team insightful input, allowing the architect to propose changes to the project, specifically the site design and new building layout. The RCO representative noted that the building's unit layout could have more variation and could include more two and three bedroom units. The RCO member requested that the courtyard should be more open, asking the design team to remove the sidewalk fronting vegetation to make it more accessible. Finally, the RCO recommended that an arborist do an assessment of existing trees to make sure healthy trees are saved.

## **3. 46<sup>th</sup> Democratic Committee Ward RCO**

The 46<sup>th</sup> Democratic Ward representative also agreed with previously stated concerns regarding design and lack of consistency with the character of the neighborhood. The RCO member commended community for all of their efforts to make their voices heard regarding this project. She mentioned concerns about height and massing are related to the RTA-1 zoning of the lot. This is a matter of zoning and not design. These issues have been raised multiple times and have been consistent through a number of meetings. The RCO representative noted that the community has expressed their desire to maintain the character of the neighborhood.

The RCO also mentioned the zoning impacts of the project, specifically the density proposed – 81 units - is not consistent with the zoning district. The RCO member noted that the project should be consistent with existing fabric of the neighborhood – density is a design feature, especially between twin-family design and multi-family designed buildings.

The RCO member felt that the community and her RCO members are being pushed aside in this process.

The RCO noted density and affordability concerns, as well as parking issues, noting that the applicant may be double counting spaces to meet the parking requirements.



### **CDR Committee Comments**

The CDR Committee had several comments about this project and recognized the RCOs concerns regarding height, density, massing, and parking.

Several committee members noted their appreciation of all the input they heard from both RCOs, and from the public community members. One CDR member noted one way to help build support within the community for this project might be to change the unit mix to include more units with more bedrooms, to increase the project's desirability for families.

The CDR Committee requested the development team explore the future uses of the courtyard, asking the design team to consider if it will be open to the public, is it fenced in, does it have benches, and what amenities and programming are available for both residents and the public.

Several members noted the existing site and surrounding community have a number of large trees and a great tree canopy. They requested the applicant try to save as many existing trees as possible and to consider planting larger more established street trees. Additionally, the Committee offered the suggestion to remove the planting area on S 48<sup>th</sup> Street adjacent to the courtyard to make it more accessible from the sidewalk. The Committee questioned its current uses and programming, and recommend replicating the current space, as a small dog park, as an amenity to the larger community.

One Committee member asked the applicant to work with arborist to review the existing street trees and make sure they were healthy enough to save. If they were not able to save trees, the committee member asked the development team to plant as many new trees as possible.

Several CDR members noted that the design of the proposed building may fit in well with the existing neighborhood, noting that the design team has responded to the context of the neighborhood through both scale and materiality. They mentioned that the project massing, the brick, and cast stone materials fit well with the adjacent heights and building stock of the surrounding blocks. They commended the development team for the project, which defines the corner well.

Several members noted that the project could improve on the environmental considerations and recommended the development team consider a green roof or solar panels to help reduce heat island temperatures, which will only increase in the future. One member appreciated that portions of the parking lot included green pavers but recommended that the pavers be extended to the whole parking lot.

Lastly, the Committee requested that staff comments be incorporated, specifically to increase the lobby and entrance transparency, and increase access to it from the courtyard. Staff also commended the development team for removing two proposed curb cuts, making it safer for sidewalk users, and for adding additional sidewalks to the interior of the site for better pedestrian movement. Finally, PCPC staff requested that the applicant team look to create a more cohesive campus facility as the owner controls more than half of the land area of the block, requesting the team consider a cohesive planting plan and connective sidewalks throughout the numerous sites.



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  
Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, dkgarofalo@gmail.com  
Councilmember Jamie Gauthier, Council District 3, Jamie.Gauthier@phila.gov  
Andrew Goodman, Representative to Council District 3, Andrew.Goodman@phila.gov  
Brett Feldman Esq., Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP, bfeldman@klehr.com  
Jerry Roller, JKRP Architects, jroller@jkrparchitects.com  
Marissa Howard, AIA, JKRP Architects, mhoward@jkrparchitects.com  
Michael Ross, Southwest Philadelphia District Services (SWPDS), swpds@aol.com  
Shawn Markovich, Cedar Park Neighbors, zoning@cedarparkneighbors.org  
Ang Sun, Ph.D., West Philly United Neighbors, woshiang@gmail.com  
Enoch Amen Ra-El, Earths Keepers Inc, earthskeepers@protonmail.com  
Catherine Blunt, 46th Ward Democratic Committee, 46wardrco@gmail.com  
Conor McAleer, Kingsessing Spirit, kingsessingspiritco1@gmail.com  
Mary McGettigan, West Philadelphia Neighbors for Progressive Planning and Preservation, westphillyplanpreserve@gmail.com  
Denise Furey, 46th Republican Ward, denise.furey@wolfe.org  
Dianne Settles, Kingsessing Area Civic Association, diannesettles@aol.com  
Nicole Ozdemir, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Nicole.Ozdemir@Phila.gov  
Reeba Babu, Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections, Reeba.Babu@phila.gov  
Michelle Brisbon, Streets Department, michelle.brisbon@phila.gov  
Kisha Duckett, Streets Department, kisha.duckett@phila.gov  
Jeanien Wilson, Streets Department, jeanien.wilson@phila.gov  
Casey Ross, Office of Transportation, Infrastructure and Sustainability, casey.ross@phila.gov  
Jennifer Dougherty, SEPTA Long Range Planning, jdougherty@septa.org  
Paula Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, paula.brumbelow@phila.gov