



**March 2, 2022**

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Department of Licenses and Inspections  
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1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
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*Civic Design Review Chair*

Daniel K. Garofalo  
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Leonidas Addimando  
Ashley Di Caro, LEED -AP  
Tavis Dockwiler, RLA  
Clarissa Kelsey, RA

**Re: Civic Design Review for 6327 Musgrave St (Application # ZP-2020-007581)**

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 residential development at 6327 Musgrave Street.

This letter is a summary of the Civic Design Review Committee's advisory recommendations. It is not an expression of the City Planning Commission's recommendation or opinion regarding zoning variances, special exceptions, or other discretionary approvals associated with this proposal.

The project proposes a multi-family residential building totaling 56,140 square feet of gross square feet. This proposal includes 67 dwelling units, and 24 bicycle parking spaces. The parcel is zoned RM-1 Residential Multi-Family and is a by-right project.

### **CDR Committee Comments**

At its meeting of December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Civic Design Review Committee conducted the first review of the project, offered the following comments, and asked the project to return for a second review:

The CDR Committee noted that the existing structure on the site meets the sidewalk, but suggested that the proposed project would fit in better with the neighborhood context if set back from the street. They also suggested that a front setback would allow for a larger walking and furnishing zone and suggested the inclusion of a semi-public space on Musgrave Street. The Committee also commented that accommodating parking could have been thoughtfully achieved.

Regarding building design, the Committee suggested an expanded unit mix, with more two and three-bedroom units, to alleviate parking concerns and provide more housing opportunities for families. They commended the use of balconies as an important amenity, but commented that the placement of the balconies appeared random. The Committee asked the applicant to better connect the exterior building design to the interior courtyard feature, and encouraged the use of high quality materials on all building elevations that are visible from a street. Last, the Committee encouraged the applicant to increase the sustainable design standards for energy and atmosphere.

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At its meeting of March 1, 2022, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**RCO Comments: (East Mount Airy Neighbors)**

East Mount Airy Neighbors RCO participated in the second and final review, expressing appreciation for the balconies on the Musgrave Street façade and acknowledge the minor changes made in response to community feedback. However, the RCO representative still felt the overall massing and design were out of context with the surrounding neighborhood and re-iterated a desire for the building to be set back from Musgrave Street. The RCO expressed concern about the long-term viability of the courtyard space and the maintenance of the plantings.

**CDR Committee Comments**

The Committee also reiterated that the building doesn't adequately relate or respond to the nearby neighborhood context. They commended the applicant for the improved building entrance, allowing for a more generous pedestrian experience on the Musgrave Street sidewalk, and greater visual access to the interior lobby. The Committee recommended that the applicant give careful thought to the plantings in the courtyard, and the plan to maintain them.

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

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Department of Planning and Development

**Civic Design Review**

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Clarissa Kelsey, RA

**Re: Civic Design Review for 150-64 W Berks Street (Application # ZP-2021-010412)**

Dear Paulose 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 150-64 W Berks Streets.

This letter is a summary of the Civic Design Review Committee's advisory recommendations. It is not an expression of the City Planning Commission's recommendation or opinion regarding zoning variances, special exceptions, or other discretionary approvals associated with this proposal.

This proposal is to build 147,938 square feet consisting of 152 dwelling units, 7,272 square feet of retail space, and 42 parking stalls. The site faces Berks Street to the north, Mascher Street to the east, private parcels with 2 story rowhomes to the south, and Hancock Street to the west. The site is zoned ICMX and this proposal has generated refusals for multifamily housing, loading spaces, and height.

At its meeting of March 1, 2022, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**(1) Registered Community Organization (RCO) Comments:**

A representative from South Kensington Community Partnership (SKCP) was in attendance.

The primary concern from the community was the height and bulk of the north-south wings, which are significantly taller than the two-story rowhomes which face Wilt Street. Consider stepping down the building massing to avoid very large walls hanging over rear yards of the rowhomes. The development team should also consider higher quality façade materials for those elevations which face the Wilt Street rowhomes.

A second concern was the lack of affordable housing inclusion in the project. The RCO notes that the project is seeking a variance for additional height and wonders how the community will benefit from allowing the extra density. The RCO encourages affordable housing to be provided on site.

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**(2) 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 notes that this is a lovely design and supports the materials, façade articulation, and fenestration sizes and patterns. They also encourage the development team to closely consider the concerns of their Wilt Street neighbors and to mitigate the impacts of the building's massing and materials.

The committee also recommends that the development team consider changes to the east-west grading of the site and to explore sinking the western parking one level below grade. The committee notes that if utility spaces can be waterproofed for a high water table, so can a parking level. Below grade parking would allow for a continuous, rentable, and active frontage along Hancock Street.

Regarding plantings and landscaping, the committee noted that some of the grasses selected may become invasive and/or might not be durable in these locations. On W Berks Street, they support the design's use of tree trenches and planters which will create vegetation on both sides of the walking zone. This would lead to a wonderful sidewalk environment. They appreciate the insertion of trees into the parking lot, but the development team should closely consider the quality and depths of soil needed to support good growth. They are in favor of using irrigation as needed to establish new plantings, but it should be turned off when no longer needed.

Regarding sustainable design, the committee encourages the exploration of rooftop solar panels, the pursuit of more sustainable design metrics, and third party design certification.

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)  
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Department of Planning and Development

**Civic Design Review**

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Clarissa Kelsey, RA

**Re: Civic Design Review for 448 Rhawn Street (Application # ZP-2021-007024)**

Dear Mr. Issac,

Pursuant to Section 14-304(5)(e)(4)(d) of the Philadelphia Zoning Code, so long as the applicant has participated in good faith within the Civic Design Review process, the application shall be deemed to have completed Civic Design Review within 150 days of written notification from L&I to the applicant that CDR is required. The CDR referral was received on July 21, 2021, which makes the 150 days deadline for this project December 18, 2021.

Another CDR meeting was not held prior to the 150 day expiration date and thus the required Civic Design Review of the proposal at 448-56 Rhawn Street was deemed complete on December 17, 2021. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission provided preliminary notice in advance of the formal recommendations. The CDR Committee requested that this proposal return for a second review at their December 7, 2021, meeting. The applicant voluntarily returned for the second CDR review on March 1, 2022.

This letter is not an expression of the City Planning Commission's recommendation or opinion regarding zoning variances, special exceptions, or other discretionary approvals associated with this proposal.

The project proposes a 4-story, 86-unit mixed used residential building fronting on Rockwell Avenue and Hartel Avenue. The proposal includes 48 parking spaces and 30 bicycle parking spaces. The project also includes 2,500 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor. The parcel is zoned CMX-2 and thus this is a by-right project.

At its meeting of March 1, 2022, the development team did not provide any updates to the project, thus the CDR Committee, RCO and Council Office comments remain from the December 7, 2021, meeting. At the December meeting the Civic Design Review Committee offered the following comments:

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**RCO Comments (Fox Chase Homeowners Association RCO):**

During the December 7 CDR meeting, the RCO representative noted that traffic is congested at the intersection of Rhawn Street and Rockwell Avenue and will get worse with the proposed project, which is adjacent to the Fox Chase SEPTA train station. It was noted that there is a high demand for on-street parking in the neighborhood, with commuters who access the station, which will get worse with the proposed project's limited parking.

The project was noted as too dense and not consistent with the community's vision for the Fox Chase Town Center. Finally, it was requested that the applicant initiate better communication with the community moving forward.

At the March 1, 2022 CDR meeting, the RCO restated the comments from the December meeting, noting disappointment in the development team for not addressing any of the first meeting comments and for a lack of further communication with the community. The representative noted appreciation of CDR Committee, Council Office and PCPC staff and thanked everyone involved for trying to address the community's concerns.

**Council District (Councilmember O'Neill)**

The Councilmember also spoke during the meeting and emphasized the concerns of the larger community, specifically highlighting concerns with parking and traffic impacts. The Councilmember noted that the project was out of scale and out of character with the existing neighborhood and requested the building have less units. The Councilmember noted that the Rockwell Avenue elevation needs to reflect the ground floor commercial use with two stories of apartments above. Finally, the Councilmember requested additional communication between the development team and the surrounding community.

**CDR Committee Comments**

Similar to the RCO representative, the CDR Committee was discouraged that the development team was unwilling to consider or make any changes to the project based on initial comments provided at the meeting in December 2021.

The Committee had originally noted the following:

The committee was discouraged about the ground floor commercial space, indicating both were undersized, had no identity, definition, or distinction to a passerby on the street and also mentioned that the layouts and back of house functions were not detailed.

The Committee noted that the proposed building could be sited better at the corner of Rockwell Avenue and Rhawn Street to match its context, specifically allowing for setbacks and more open space. This would help the density and massing align with larger institutional buildings in the neighborhood. These setbacks would also allow for additional streetscape amenities which both staff and the committee encouraged including street trees and bicycle U-racks.

The Committee noted that the façade would benefit from higher quality materials and great depth to break up the mass of the large building. Additional architectural definition was also encouraged, in particular the lobby space needs greater thought. It was recommended that the residential lobby glazing wrap the corner to better activate the side of the building that faces Fox Chase Station.



As mentioned by both the RCO and Councilmember, the applicant was encouraged to increase unit sizes, while also potentially lessening parking demand.

This concludes the summary of the CDR process.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director

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**Re: Civic Design Review for 518 Hartel Avenue (Application # ZP-2021-007025)**

Dear Mr. Issac,

Pursuant to Section 14-304(5)(e)(4)(d) of the Philadelphia Zoning Code, so long as the applicant has participated in good faith within the Civic Design Review process, the application shall be deemed to have completed Civic Design Review within 150 days of written notification from L&I to the applicant that CDR is required. The CDR referral was received on July 30, 2021, which makes the 150 days deadline for this project December 27, 2021.

Another CDR meeting was not held prior to the 150 day expiration date and thus the required Civic Design Review of the proposal at 518 Hartel Avenue was deemed complete on December 20, 2021. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission provided preliminary notice in advance of the formal recommendations. The CDR Committee requested that this proposal return for a second review at their December 7, 2021, meeting. The applicant voluntarily returned for the second CDR review on March 1, 2022.

This letter is not an expression of the City Planning Commission's recommendation or opinion regarding zoning variances, special exceptions, or other discretionary approvals associated with this proposal.

The project proposes a 4-story, 67-unit mixed used residential building fronting on Rockwell Avenue and Hartel Avenue. The proposal includes 39 parking spaces and 30 bicycle parking spaces. The project also includes 2,000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor. The parcel is zoned CMX-2 and thus this is a by-right project.

At its meeting of March 1, 2022, the development team did not provide any updates to the project, thus the CDR Committee, RCO and Council Office comments remain from the December 7, 2021, meeting. At the December meeting the Civic Design Review Committee offered the following comments:

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**RCO Comments (Fox Chase Homeowners Association RCO):**

During the December 7 CDR meeting, the RCO representative noted that traffic is bad at the intersection of Rhawn Street and Rockwell Avenue and will get worse with the proposed project just to the south. It was noted that there is an on-street parking problem in the neighborhood today, with commuters who access the Fox Chase Station, which will get worse with the proposed project's limited parking. It was requested that the development team look to include larger units which would help reflect the needs of the neighborhood. The project was noted as too dense and not consistent with the community's vision for the Fox Chase Town Center. The RCO representative noted that flooding should be examined near this parcel, and the potential future impacts of this new development should be investigated. Finally, it was requested that the applicant initiate better communication with the community about what will go into the commercial spaces.

At the March 1 CDR meeting, the RCO restated the comments from the December meeting, noting disappointment in the development team for not addressing any of the first meeting comments and for a lack of further communication with the community. The representative noted appreciation of CDR Committee, Council Office and PCPC staff comments and thanked everyone involved for trying to address the community's concerns.

**Council District (Councilmember O'Neill)**

The Councilmember also spoke during the meeting and emphasized the concerns of the larger community, specifically noting concerns with parking and traffic impacts. The Councilmember noted that the project would be out of scale and out of character with the existing neighborhood and requested the building have less units. Finally, the Councilmember requested additional communication between the development team and the surrounding community.

**CDR Committee Comments**

Similar to the RCO representative, the CDR Committee was discouraged that the development team was unwilling to consider or make any changes to the project based on initial comments provided at the meeting in December 2021.

The Committee had originally noted the following:

The committee was discouraged about the ground floor commercial spaces, indicating both were undersized, had no identity, definition, or distinction to a passerby on the street and also mentioned that the layouts and back of house functions were not refined. It was recommended that the development team explore ways to extend the active ground floor beyond the prominent building curve.

The Committee recommended using brick for the façades versus the veneer stone currently proposed, which would help align the design with the adjacent neighborhood context. Additionally more architectural definition was encouraged to distinguish the residential lobby entrance.

The Committee noted that the stricken portion of Hartel Ave could be designed as a great open space that connects with the ground floor commercial space and at the March 1 meeting it was further requested to reach out to PWD to see if temporary or movable features could be allowed.

Finally, the CDR Committee agreed with the RCO representative and requested a greater unit mix (e.g. more two and three bedroom units) which may aid in lowering the parking



demand and help attract more families. There was also discussion about adding a second elevator for the current proposed unit count.

As noted, this project had previously concluded the CDR process, PCPC staff provides the comments in the hopes of improvements moving forward.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Sharpe  
Executive Director

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Clarissa Kelsey, RA

**Re: Civic Design Review for 1120 Frankford Avenue (Application # ZP-2021-014034)**

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 mixed-use development at 1120 Frankford Avenue.

This letter is a summary of the Civic Design Review Committee's advisory recommendations. It is not an expression of the City Planning Commission's recommendation or opinion regarding zoning variances, special exceptions, or other discretionary approvals associated with this proposal.

This proposal is to build a total of 90,901 square feet comprised of one six-story mixed-use building including 150 residential units (15 affordable units), 7,166 square feet for retail spaces, 50 bicycle parking spaces, and no vehicular parking spaces. This proposal is by right, it is zoned CMX- 2.5 and is utilizing mixed-income Housing and green roof bonuses.

At its meeting of March 1, 2022, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**RCO Comments: (Fishtown Neighbors Association)**

At the meeting, the RCO letter was read on record since the representative had to leave the meeting. At the public meeting on January 18, 2022, the following comments had been brought up:

The community was supportive of:

- Choices of materials, including extensive use of brick.
- Inclusion of on-site income-restricted units.
- Inclusion of maximum allowable number of street trees.

The community requested the following changes to the plan:

- Change of the location of the bike room to a more easily accessible location.
- Replacement of selected tree species with cherry blossom trees.
- Explore additional activation of Dunton Street, through commercial spaces, public seating, and or additional landscaping.
- Addition of on-street carshare spaces on Dunton Street.
- The removal of first floor amenity spaces with commercial spaces.
- Connect the smaller commercial space to the rear patio.
- Addition of a package security system to reduce the risk of theft.

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### **RCO Comments: (Fishtown Kensington Area BID)**

The RCO representative mentioned that at their RCO meeting on December 15, 2021, the RCO board had unanimously voted to support the project appreciating the ground floor commercial spaces along Frankford Avenue which also allowed for wide variety of tenants, specifically food and beverage. The RCO was also supportive of the exterior lighting and façade treatment on Frankford Avenue. They mentioned that they would like the development team to further activate the Dunton Street façade and the entrances and exits there. Finally, the RCO representative appreciated that the commercial trash would be collected from Dunton Street.

### **CDR Committee Comments**

At the meeting the Civic Design Review Committee mentioned that the ground floor building facades would provide enough lighting without the building's up lighting. Up lighting can be an environment concern as it contributes to urban light pollution. The committee member also acknowledged that although trash pickup might be difficult to manage, it would be worthwhile to consider ways to handle it from Frankford Avenue as opposed to narrow Dunton Street.

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CDR committee suggested the inclusion of solar panels on the roof. The bamboo plant selection was questioned, as it is considered invasive. The development team agreed to look for native species to replace it. In addition, because of the below-grade utilities, the planters should be as deep as possible.

Another CDR committee member believed that the open space on the southern portion of the site could benefit from additional thought. The private outdoor spaces are slightly below grade, while the amenity space is at grade. Ensuring that all outdoor spaces are accessible is critical, and in addition, the spaces should be well integrated. A committee member also suggested that the team explore creative ways to incorporate the existing Fishtown cat mural.

Lastly, the CDR Committee chair believed that the project was well-designed, and adopted the Planning Commission staff comments:

### **Site Design**

- Staff appreciates the removal of three existing curb cuts which help minimize the conflicts between pedestrian and bicycles with auto.
- Please include the building zone in the Complete Streets dimensions and ensure the walking zone meets the Complete Streets requirements.
- Please identify the location of trash room.
- Staff supports the location of outdoor amenity spaces in the back to move them further away from I-95 and appreciates the inclusion of private outdoor spaces for residential units.
- Staff suggests a more robust buffer between the retail outdoor space and the units facing north. Also, please explain the access points to this outdoor space.
- Staff asks for more information about the entrances on Dunton Street, what each entrance is utilized for and how the circulation works.



## Building Design

- Staff commends the development team for transparent ground floors and the articulated façade design consistent with the surrounding neighborhood character.
- Staff notes that canopies with any future tenants' signs on them would require Art Commission approval.
- Staff encourages the team to utilize high-quality brick material on all four elevations.
- Staff recommends a more transparent and activated Dunton Street ground floor design.

## Sustainable Design

- Consider investing in solar panels or other on-site renewable energy strategies.
- Consider providing air filters and sound attenuation systems for occupied spaces given the proximity of this development to I-95.
- The project is within OTIS's 5-year extension plan, please reach out to Waffiyah Murray ([waffiyah.murray@phila.gov](mailto:waffiyah.murray@phila.gov)) at OTIS to consider the possibility of addition of a bike share station along N. Front 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

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Department of Planning and Development

## **Civic Design Review**

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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**March 4, 2022**

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*Executive Director*

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**Re: Civic Design Review for 1351-59 Frankford Avenue (Application # ZP-2021-006455C)**

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 1351-59 Frankford Avenue.

This letter is a summary of the Civic Design Review Committee's advisory recommendations. It is not an expression of the City Planning Commission's recommendation or opinion regarding zoning variances, special exceptions, or other discretionary approvals associated with this proposal.

The proposal is a four-story mixed-use building with over 49,000 square feet including 61 dwelling units, 3 retail spaces along the ground floor at Frankford Avenue, and 21 bicycle spaces. No vehicular parking spaces are required or included. The zoning is CMX-2. The project is by-right and utilizes the Green Roof Bonus and Mixed Income Housing Bonus to achieve additional height and units.

At its meeting of March 1, 2022, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

Will Dungan of Fishtown Neighbors Association (the coordinating RCO) and Marc Collazzo of Fishtown Kensington Area Business Improvement District were both in attendance to speak to the project. Both were in support of the proposal overall and thanked the design team for their responsiveness. They noted that the team included the gate at the residential entry in response to community concerns about security in the entrance alley. Mr. Dungan suggested alternative materials for the alley paving to ensure accessibility, encouraged additional measures to mitigate noise between the patio spaces and neighbors, and suggested more bike facilities to accommodate visitors.

The CDR Committee was in support of the project as well, with several Committee members describing the proposal as architecturally well-designed, highlighting the material choices and use of setbacks and courtyards to maximize an irregular site. The design team was encouraged to rethink the basement-level bedrooms facing Crease Street, and to give greater thought to the functionality of trash service and tenant move-in/move out to minimize impacts to neighbors and ensure the building is accessible and serviceable for residents. Echoing the RCO comments, more bike parking was requested along Frankford Avenue, along with shade trees where possible. The up lighting shown on the Frankford Avenue façade was discouraged.

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Finally, the Committee advocated for the inclusion of solar panels as this roof design could accommodate them with minimal effort.

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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