



**Oct. 12, 2022**

Paulose Issac,  
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**Re: Civic Design Review for 20-30 West Allens Lane (Application # ZP-2022-004845)**

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 multi-family building at 20-30 West Allens Lane.

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 77,353 square feet of gross floor area. This proposal includes 76 dwelling units, 26 car parking spaces, and 26 bike parking spaces. The parcel is zoned RM-1 Residential Multi-Family, is a by-right project, and utilizes a Green Roof bonus as well as a Mixed-income Housing bonus via on-site affordable units.

At its meeting of October 11, 2022 the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**RCO Comments: West Mount Airy Neighbors**

At the meeting, the RCO representative corrected the record of the first meeting by mentioning it was not stated that they had received a parking study from the development team and parking was still a major concern of the community for this project. They also mentioned that the community met with the applicant on September 22, 2022 to discuss the changes in the massing of the building to minimize its effects on the residences along Nippon Street and the adjacent property on West Allens Lane and those comments were not taken into consideration since there had not been any changes made in that regard.

The RCO expressed concerns about the facade on West Allens Lane and recommended the addition of a mansard roof, balconies, or other articulations to help with the appearance of the upper floors. The RCO representative was disappointed to see no changes to the overall massing of the building and had hoped to see more improvements to help the appearance of the building to be more appealing. It was also mentioned that some community members agreed to support a variance for the increased height of the front façade if the development team had decided to reduce the scale of the rear side of the building and add to the density of the front façade.

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## CDR Committee Comments

At the meeting, one committee member appreciated the addition of the context in the site plan. The committee member also discussed the existing wooden fence which would be visible from the street on the northeast elevation and it would be more transparent and easier to walk around if they were enclosing the private patios. The development team agreed to update those, however mentioned that the one on the property line would be utilized for egress only and would stay as is.

Another committee member believed that the building was too large for its context and suggested reducing the number of residential units on the rear to reduce its impact on Nippon Street. The committee member appreciated the number of windows on the exterior facades which would help all the units have bedrooms with windows, however suggested changing the unit arrangements to add more corner two-bedroom units for more variety. The CDR committee member also appreciated wrapping the building's front façade with the stone material because of its visibility from West Allens Lane.

CDR committee recommended large-canopy trees to be planted on the sidewalk for this development and believed that would help with the perception of the scale of the building in the long term. It was also suggested that solar panels be added to the roof as part of this development and the applicant mentioned that they had started the conversations with Solar States to investigate the possibility of this request.

Lastly, the CDR Committee adopted the Planning Commission staff comments:

### Site Design

- Staff notes the design changes made, however believes that there is still a missed opportunity to connect the building entrance and the open space to the sidewalk for better interaction.

### Building Design

- Staff suggests more meaningful architectural articulations, higher quality materials, material differentiation, and massing composition to conform with the historical character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood.

### Sustainable Design

- Staff encourages the team to meet more sustainable design metrics. Please look into including the solar panels in the design.
- Staff encourages the team to investigate utilization of the raingardens to capture on street stormwater runoffs.

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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**October 11, 2022**

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**Re: 1000-10 N Delaware Avenue (Application # ZP- 2022-002776)**

Dear Cheli 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 and commercial mixed-use development at 1000-10 N Delaware 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 project proposes a new 69,160 square foot mixed-use building composed of 78 dwelling units and 4,670 square feet of commercial space. No off-street parking or loading spaces are associated with this proposal. The site is bound Frankford Avenue to the west, N Delaware Avenue to the southeast, Sarah Street to the east, and E Allen Street to the north. The site is adjacent to SEPTA's trolley turnaround on Frankford Avenue.

At its meeting of October 11, 2022, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments, which include Planning Commission staff observations adopted by the CDR Committee:

### **Registered Community Organization (RCO) Comments**

#### Fishtown Kensington Business Investment District (BID)

The RCO supports development of this scale on the site and appreciates the active frontages on Frankford and Delaware Avenues. They feel that building's ground floor will support and work with existing retail, dining, and entertainment uses. They also note that this development will complement the intentions of the Frankford Avenue Connector, a planning and urban design proposal sponsored by the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation (DRWC).

The BID also supports the incorporation of public open space along Frankford Avenue and the applicant's commitment to work with the community to provide suitable uses.

#### Fishtown Neighbors Association (FNA)

The FNA supports the comments of the Fishtown and Kensington BID.

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Regarding transit and bicycles, FNA expressed a concern with the pending changes to the Route 25 bus which currently connects the waterfront to the main commercial activity of Fishtown. They suggested that the applicant should incorporate more exterior bicycle parking and consider an Indego Station to support alternative means of transportation.

FNA is also appreciative of the proposed public open space and asks the applicant to consider residents walking about the neighborhood when planning its uses and programming. They also ask that the commercial tenant play an active role in the management and maintenance of the space, expressing concerns with relying on volunteers from the surrounding community. They encouraged exploring public-private partnerships and associated amenities such as public bathrooms.

### **CDR Committee Comments**

The Committee supported this proposal as a well-designed project, noting that its materials, scale, overall building height, and its first floor heights are appropriate for this site.

For the proposed public open space, the committee offered a variety of comments. They note that the space has been designed for people to walk through but not to occupy, which might need to be reconsidered given the proximity to the trolley stop and numerous commercial venues. They encourage more opportunities for seating and gathering and more programming of the space. They encouraged finding creative solutions for the grading differences between the points of entry and sidewalk levels. They also offered praise for the sculptural uses of the proposed planters – they are a playful and interesting response to the site. They suggested refinements, such as a seating nook and ensuring proper soil depths, and greater clarity in the design and placement of the seating. Native plantings are also encouraged, and continuous tree pits should be explored for the street trees.

The applicant is also encouraged to coordinate the design and use of the open space with any adjustments to the trolley station planned by the South Eastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA). Additionally, ground floor retail spaces and tenant selection should reflect the needs of the local community.

The committee expressed concerns with loading and the traffic configuration around the site. The committee urges the applicant and future operators to avoid any situation where loading would take place on Delaware Avenue, noting the high traffic volumes and the existing bike lane – allowing loading there could create a dangerous condition for cyclists. The applicant is encouraged to confine loading to East Allen Street, however the street is one-way from the east and loading there might not be an easy or obvious choice. The applicant should work with the Streets Department for the appropriate signage and striping to encourage the use of Allen Street for loading.

The Committee echoes the concerns of the loss of the Route 25 bus noted by the Fishtown Neighbors Associations and encourages further coordination with SEPTA on transit improvements, particularly for changes to the trolley turn-around. The applicant should closely coordinate the building footprint with the future design and placement of SEPTA shelters and support structures, ensuring that proper walking zones and ADA clearances are maintained. The applicant is also encouraged to



provide additional setbacks on Sarah Street to create a walking zone consistent with Complete Streets standards, and to consider more bike parking and the provision of Indego Bike Share. Regarding sustainable design, the applicant is encouraged to meet more sustainable design metrics and to consider 3<sup>rd</sup> party sustainable 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

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**Re: Civic Design Review for 3615 Chestnut Street (Application # ZP-2022-005023)**

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 residential building at 3615-35 Chestnut 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 proposal introduces a new residential tower on a 1.45 acre site in University City. The proposal is for a 473,001 square foot building consisting of 236 multi-family dwelling units, 127 group living units, 70 underground parking spaces and 96 bicycle parking spaces. Two loading spaces and the curb cut to the underground parking are also proposed off of Ludlow Street. The site is bounded by Chestnut Street to the south, Ludlow Street to the north and is situated just to the west of the locally designated Ralston House, which is on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Just to the west of the site is also University of Pennsylvania's 37<sup>th</sup> Street pedestrian walk. The site is zoned CMX-4, and the project does not require any zoning variances or special exceptions.

At its meeting of October 11, 2022, the CDR Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**RCO Comments: (27<sup>th</sup> Ward Republican RCO)**

A representative from the 27<sup>th</sup> Ward Republican RCO noted their support for this proposal. The RCO representative approved of the ongoing communication with the applicant and highlighted that the design fits well within the context of the surrounding neighborhood. Overall, the RCO was in support of this project.

**CDR Committee Comments**

At the October 11 meeting, the CDR Committee was mostly complimentary of the project and provided the following comments.

The CDR Committee was appreciative of the underground parking and the automated parking system, which allows for more usable and active space on the ground floor. The Committee also applauded the direct ground floor connection the bicycle parking room. The committee noted that the project was well contextualized and will become a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

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The Committee requested that the pedestrian experience of the proposal be explored further. Currently, the design lacks information regarding ground floor uses and interactions between the building and surrounding streetscape. One Committee member noted that the pedestrian experience is somewhat neglected. It was suggested that the design team explore ways to improve public realm, specifically along Chestnut Street which is a major university corridor and has close proximity to the MFL, 37<sup>th</sup> Street walk and the historic Ralston House open space.

The Committee noted the applicant team should engage with community members regarding any public amenities the building can provide. This aligns with PCPC staff comments which included providing more active ground floor uses, specifically along Chestnut Street. The Committee noted that more attention could be paid to the ground floor level – specifically to the east of the building, which is adjacent to the historically designated building and open space. Currently, this side of the building is proposed to include mostly back of house storage and service areas. The committee questioned if this area along the entry courtyard could have better access or utilize more open glazing to allow for views to the lawn.

The Committee requested that the applicant team protect the existing street trees as much as possible during construction and replace any street trees if damaged. Finally, the Committee requested that the applicant team consider 3rd party certification.

PCPC staff also noted that higher quality materials and additional architectural articulation be incorporated into the building design. Staff suggests exploring setbacks, offsets, balconies, or other elements to break up the scale of tower.

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,

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Department of Planning and Development

**Civic Design Review**

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