



**May 5, 2023**

Matthew Wojcik  
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**Re: Civic Design Review for 130 W Girard Ave (Application # ZP-2022-012187)**

Dear Matthew Wojcik,

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 building at 130 W Girard 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 multi-family building totaling 61,669 gross square feet. The first floor contains the residential lobby and a 3,500 square foot retail space fronting Girard Avenue. There are 11 automobile parking spaces and 28 class 1A bicycle parking spaces under the building. Floors 2 through 7 contain 84 dwelling units (57,000 square feet). The parcel is zoned CMX-3 Community Commercial Mixed-Use and is a by-right project.

At its meeting of May 2, 2023, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

There was no RCO in attendance, but the following comments were submitted in writing from the Northern Liberties Neighbors Association:

- We appreciate the use of brick.
- Grime and graffiti will be a challenge to clean from the limestone.
- We like the green space facing the near neighbors and would like to see it built and landscaped as presented.
- Please increase the frequency of bollards to reduce sidewalk parking.
- The lighting around the building at pedestrian levels is excellent.
- Given the adjacent 2- and 3-story single-family homes, we would like to see the building step down (except at Girard Avenue, where it could be higher).
- The loading situation seems insufficient, and we are concerned that 2 of the 11 dedicated parking spaces will be used for move-ins.
- While we support the use of car share, in the event the developer cannot make an agreement with a car share provider, or the agreement lapses, the building will permanently have 8 fewer parking spots than otherwise required.

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### **CDR Committee Comments**

Committee members supported the proposed building including the inclusion of balconies, durable materials, and 2-bedroom units. However, they suggested that the addition of more 2-bedroom units might offer the benefit of attracting more families. In addition, one member of the committee stated that roof deck is a nice amenity, but that solar panels should be used as a trellis to both shade the space and generate on-site renewable energy.

They pointed out that the entrance into the residential lobby is from a narrow sidewalk under the building with cars on one side. The design team was strongly encouraged to make the entrance more prominent by reducing the two adjacent parking spaces to fit compact sizes only.

There was lengthy discussion of the design of the building in relation to O'Neil Street including support for the staff recommendation to widen the sidewalk here. The committee encouraged the development team to remove the electric poles and overhead wires on O'Neil Street due to the narrow width of sidewalk, proximity to new units, and to reduce visual clutter. Additional bollards might be considered to further deter car parking around the project site and specifically at the corner.

There was also considerable discussion that the proposed covered open space be designed to contribute to a continuous, uniform ground space inclusive of the O'Neil Street and Howard Street rights-of-way.

While the committee members appreciated the amount of landscaping proposed, they requested additional seating and furnishings both in the covered open space and along O'Neil 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**

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**May 2, 2023**

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**Re: Civic Design Review for 1440 N Front Street (Application # ZP-2023-002487)**

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 residential and retail building at 1440 N Front 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 73,979 total square feet comprised of 114 dwelling units, 1,938 square feet of retail space, and 18 vehicular parking spaces. The site is roughly an "L" shaped lot, bound by Front Street to the east and Jefferson Street to the north, with a segment of the site extending to Hope Street to the west. The remaining edges of the site face private parcels. It is also worth noting that the eastern edge on Front Street also faces the Market-Frankford "El" or elevated train line. The site is zoned CMX-3 and no zoning refusals have been identified by Licenses and Inspections.

At its meeting of May 2, 2023, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**Registered Community Organization (RCO) Comments,  
Fishtown Kensington Area Business Improvement District (BID):**

The RCO expressed appreciation for the willingness of the applicant to meet with and respond to their concerns and feedback. They felt that the project contributed to their goals, which included creating a walkable corridor and adding commercial spaces on N Front Street, similar to the activity on Frankford Avenue.

The RCO commended the design for its urban feel, its materials, and its response to the architecture and placement of the Market-Frankford El train line. The RCO also supports the inclusion of green spaces including a space accessible to the public and the green roof. The project's response to Hope Street, the inclusion of bike parking, and accommodation of trash pick-up on Jefferson Street were also noted as positive aspects of the design.

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**CDR Committee Comments:**

The CDR committee' recommendations include comments adopted from Planning Commission staff.

The committee commended the development team for successful engagement with the community, as complimented by the RCO directly.

Regarding building design, the architecture developed for Jefferson Street is contextual – it is an open façade with materials and details that respond well to the Market Frankford EI. The committee also notes that the architecture facing Front Street could be further developed by exploring details and refinements which match the quality of the elevation on Jefferson Street. If allowable and not a noise concern, the applicant could explore balconies and setbacks on Front Street. Hope Street elevations are an appropriate response to the narrower street, but could also benefit from more expansive glazing, similar to the sizes of windows facing Jefferson and Front Streets.

To further activate streets, the development team is urged to increase the amount and number of commercial spaces, and/or to locate commercial spaces at the corner of Jefferson and Front Streets. It is noted that Jefferson Street has high foot traffic due to its proximity to the retail businesses of Frankford Avenue. Commercial tenants are more likely to succeed if they can be seen and entered from Jefferson Street.

Regarding the size and mix of units, the committee urges the applicant to include more two-bedroom or even three-bedroom units. The development team should also explore one, two, and three-bedroom units which are larger in size – the currently proposed sizes are unlikely to support families. New housing for the neighborhood should accommodate more than just young professionals.

Regarding sustainable design, the committee commends the development team for pursuing extensive areas of green roofs, but also urges the installation of windows which meet the sound reduction standards of the Sustainable Design checklist. This is strongly recommended for units facing the Market Frankford EI structure.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Sharpe  
Executive Director

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**Civic Design Review**

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**May 3, 2023**

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**Re: Civic Design Review for 9122 Dewees Street (Application # ZP-2022-008180)**

Dear Reeba 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 multifamily development at 9122 Dewees 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 total of 97,388 square feet of gross floor area. It includes 78 residential units (in four 3-story buildings), 69 vehicular parking spaces, and 26 bike parking spaces. The parcel is zoned RSA-3 and there are refusals issued for the use, number of principle buildings, side and front yard depth, and bicycle parking spaces.

At its meeting of May 2, 2023, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**RCO Comments: (Northeast Community Civic Alliance)**

The RCO representative mentioned that during the RCO meeting, there had been overwhelming support for the design of this development. Given the ongoing conversations about the Community Benefits Agreement, they had not yet issued their letter of support, however they will be happy to do so after the CBA is finalized.

**Council District 6<sup>th</sup> Office Comments:**

The representative from the Council District's office supported the project and expressed appreciation for the inclusion of the playground and the addition of solar panels as part of this development.

**CDR Committee Comments**

The committee chair commended the development team for working closely with the community and also supported the inclusion of family-sized units, mentioning that the architectural design of the buildings was appealing because of features such as balconies, loft spaces, backyards, and shared amenity spaces.

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There was some discussion about the pathways and the buffer between the parking lot and the buildings, including suggestions on how to increase outdoor amenity spaces in front of the entrances for day-to-day interactions. The committee chair suggested reducing the drive aisles to find more transitional space between the parking lot and building entrances. The committee also encouraged the development team to include dog friendly areas.

The addition of more trees throughout the site was also suggested to mitigate the heat island effect and to provide more shading for the site. The parking lot could be rearranged to create room for more trees. The additions of more crosswalks and different pavement material were also suggested.

In terms of sustainability, electric vehicle parking spaces are included in the proposal and the committee appreciated the incorporation of solar panels.

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

#### **Site Context**

- Donaldson and Carwithan Streets are not on the City Plan, with no record of legal opening. Staff recommends the addition of six foot sidewalks along these two streets.
- The rail line behind this development is owned by Conrail, and is neither currently in use, nor formally abandoned.

#### **Site Design**

- Consider connecting proposed internal pathways to existing pedestrian sidewalks from the surrounding residential complexes.
- The internal walkways are undersized and not connected throughout the site, please consider setting the buildings back to allow for at least a six-foot width for internal pathways.
- Staff appreciates the inclusion of a playground as part of this development given the inclusion of large 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom units.
- Staff appreciates the addition of more trees to the site and would like to ask to maximize the number of yard trees where possible for more shade on the site.
- Please include more transparent fences around the perimeter of the site.

#### **Building Design**

- Consider rearranging the ground floor plan to include the unit entrances along Dewees Street for better activation of the sidewalk.

#### **Sustainable Design**

- Staff encourages the team to pursue third party certification.
- Staff suggests using pervious pavement material for the surface parking lot.





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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