



September 15, 2020

Mr. Paulose Isaac  
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*

Nancy Rogo Trainer, FAIA, AICP  
*Civic Design Review Chair*

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

Leonidas Addimando  
Ashley Di Caro, LEED -AP  
Tavis Dockwiler, RLA  
Michael Johns, AIA, NOMA, LEED-AP  
Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 700 N. Delaware Ave (Application No. 1051650)**

Dear Mr. Isaac,

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 **700 N. Delaware Ave.**

The proposal is for a development consisting of two seven story buildings bounded by Delaware Avenue to the east, Fairmount Avenue to the south, Front Street to the west, and the former Brown Street right-of-way to the north. Together, the buildings contain 504,289 gross square feet composed of 488 residential units, 14,416 square feet of retail space, 143 parking spaces, and 190 bike parking spaces. The site is zoned CMX-3 and is in the Central Delaware Overlay. The project, as modified by the CDR process is by-right.

The project was first heard at the August 11, 2020 CDR meeting and was asked back for a second review. At its meeting of September 8, 2020, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**1. RCO Comments:**

A representative from the Northern Liberties Neighborhood Association (NLNA) attended both the August 11<sup>th</sup> and September 8<sup>th</sup> meetings and offered the following comments:

The NLNA representative expressed that the development team has been responsive and addressed earlier resident concerns.

**2. CDR Committee Comments:**

At the August 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, the CDR Committee provided several recommendations to improve the public realm of the project. The design team responded with amended drawings at the September 8<sup>th</sup> CDR meeting, as follows:

- a. The CDR committee appreciated the efforts made prior to CDR to improve the Delaware Avenue frontage but requested more resolution of the proposed lobby and retail spaces to ensure feasible active uses. The design team responded by widening the residential lobby and programmed it as a lounge for use by residents. The proposed retail

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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- space was increased in size to 2,000 square feet. In response to flooding concerns, the design team raised the ground floor elevation in both the retail and lounge areas to mitigate concerns with the floodplain.
- b. The CDR committee asked the design team to further consider the safety of pedestrians at the crosswalk of Delaware Avenue as it is adjacent to the proposed curb cut. The design team responded that the existing curb cut on Delaware Avenue will be shifted to be directly across from Penn Street (approximately 20' north of the crosswalk) at a traffic signal for safe access to the site.
  - c. The CDR committee encouraged the design team to include more programming and stronger pedestrian connections to the former Beach Street walkway to ensure it is active and vibrant. The design team responded by widening the sidewalk connection between Beach Street and Delaware Avenue and proposed signage added to draw pedestrians to Beach street.
  - d. The CDR committee requested that the layout of the parking be improved to increase space for landscaping. The design team responded by eliminated four parking spaces to the north of the Delaware Avenue building and by changing the material to concrete pavers at the loading area.
  - e. The CDR committee asked the design team to reconsider the feasibility of accessing the loading spaces from the Delaware Avenue curb cut. The design team did not make any changes in response to this request.
  - f. The CDR committee asked the design team to limit the curb cuts on Front Street to one. The design team did not make any changes in response to this request (in addition to the one existing curb cut, the proposed design introduces a second).
  - g. The CDR committee asked the design team to consider the scale and relationship of the proposed buildings to the row of eight Federal-style buildings on Fairmount Avenue listed on the local Philadelphia Historic Register. In addition, the CDR committee encouraged further refinement of the overall design with respect to materials and styles used, but also in terms of which areas are public versus private. The design team did not make any changes in response to this request.
  - h. The CDR committee commented that second floor deck fronting on Delaware Avenue be made public with a system of stepping or ramping to access the deck. The design team did not make any changes in response to this request.
  - i. The CDR committee asked the design team to meet more metrics and/or consider LEED or other third party certification. The design team did not make any changes in response to this request.

At the September 8th CDR meeting, the CDR committee asked the design to further refine the ground floor on Delaware Avenue, allow for public access to the second floor deck fronting on Delaware Avenue, and to work with community on programming and art for the public space on the former Brach Street right-of-way alignment.

This project will require parking garage façade review by the Planning Commission before a building permit can be issued.



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: Nancy Rogo Trainer, Chair, Civic Design Review, nrt23@drexel.edu  
Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, garofalod@rowan.edu  
Councilmember Mark Squilla, mark.squilla@phila.gov  
Sean McMonagle, Legislative Assistant, sean.mcmonagle@phila.gov  
Deidre DeAscanis, JKRP Architects, ddeascanis@jkrparchitects.com  
Hercules Grigos, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP, hgrigos@klehr.com  
Matt Ruben, Central Delaware Advocacy Group, mruben@gmail.com  
Barbara Pennock, West Girard Progress, bjchavous@gmail.com  
Larry Freedman, Northern Liberties Neighbors, larryfreedman@comcast.net  
Craig Charlton, 5th Ward Republican RCO, charlton.craig@hotmail.com  
Ian Litwin, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, ian.litwin@phila.gov  
Paulose Isaac, L&I, paulose.issac@phila.gov



September 10, 2020

Ms. Caitlin M. Mest  
Department of Licenses and Inspections  
Municipal Services Building, Concourse  
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Eleanor Sharpe  
*Executive Director*

Nancy Rogo Trainer, FAIA, AICP  
*Civic Design Review Chair*

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

Leonidas Addimando  
Ashley Di Caro, LEED -AP  
Tavis Dockwiler, RLA  
Michael Johns, AIA, NOMA, LEED-AP  
Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 4701-29 Pine Street (Application # ZP-2020-000954C)**

Dear Ms. Mest,

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 development at **4701-29 Pine Street**.

The proposal is for the addition of one 6-story residential building on top of an existing two-story parking garage of 260 parking spaces. The total number of residential units proposed is 120. The site currently accommodates 146 dwelling units and ground floor commercial spaces, some of which the proposal intends to keep but redesigns their interior layouts. The project site is zoned CMX-3 and the proposal has no zoning variances.

At its meeting of September 8, 2020, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**1. RCO Comments – Garden Court Community Association (GCCA)**

The RCO representative noted that the main concern the community had regarding this project was the housing affordability, stating that the community would like to keep the mixed-income character of the neighborhood as it has been historically. This issue was echoed a few times during the meeting and was reflected on the CDR committee members' comments as well.

The representative added that the community was concerned about the potential changes to the existing community garden located on the site by the massing of the building proposed. However, they were satisfied with the new design layout, as long as sufficient public access was provided.

The RCO noted that location of the residential lobby and the elevators on Pine street would make the travel distance too long for the residents living on the Northeast corner of the tower. The GCCA representative then echoed the staff comment about the possibility of adding two street trees on the Pine Street sidewalk, while showing appreciation for the one tree that had been added to 47<sup>th</sup> Street. They expressed concerns about the condition of the streetscape in this area including the sidewalk on 47<sup>th</sup> Street which needed to be replaced, and lack of pedestrian-scaled lighting.

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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Finally, the RCO representative confirmed the staff comment about the interference of multiple curb cuts on Pine Street with pedestrian walking and requested that they be consolidated if possible.

**2. RCO Comments – West Philadelphia Neighbors for Progressive Planning and Preservation (WPPP)**

The RCO representative noted that most of their comments and concerns had been expressed by PCPC staff and the GCCA, and their concern about the massing and fenestration had been resolved with the new design layout. Their main concern was loss of green space. It was also emphasized that the residents' accessibility to the single elevator was an issue especially for senior residents and people with disabilities and therefore the RCO member requested that another entrance be added to the 47<sup>th</sup> Street side if feasible. The WPPP representative requested that the lack of public accessibility to the courtyard be resolved.

**3. City Council 3<sup>rd</sup> District Office Comments**

The City Council representative emphasized the importance of the affordability of the residential units proposed as well as the maintenance of the existing historic building and asked the development team to meet with the community again to resolve these issues. The City Council representative agreed with the rest of the comments that had been expressed during the meeting.

**4. CDR Committee Comments**

The CDR Committee generally supported the project and approved of the building scale, massing, and materials. The committee unanimously agreed on the importance of providing affordable units and keeping the courtyard open to the public.

In addition, the Committee made the following recommendations for the project:

1. The Committee and PCPC Staff noted that the loss of the green roof should be accommodated by addition of more of green space. The committee suggested the development make the new, highest roof a green roof to mitigate the urban heat island effect.
2. The Committee also suggested that the development team research examples of privately owned community spaces that do not have gates as they believed gates and “fob” entrances send an exclusionary message.
3. One of the Committee members had concerns about the new massing and material being too similar to the existing building and asked to see more creativity regarding this matter.
4. The Committee also showed some concerns about the number of activities happening in the courtyard in close proximity and suggested that more space be allocated to the community garden and the amenity spaces to ensure the full potential of the common space.
5. The Committee also accepted staff comments including:
  - a. The project is applauded for the activation of the ground floor with the addition of transparency to the existing building façade and various activities. Also, staff commends the applicant's effort in preserving the existing building and existing neighborhood



- commercial character by rearranging the ground floor commercial spaces.
- b. Multiple curb cuts on Pine Street interfere with pedestrian movement. Moreover, addition of two extra trees along this sidewalk would be beneficial.
  - c. The long parking garage wall gives a great opportunity for a combination of public art, green walls, and more interactive design solutions.
  - d. Staff questions how the controlled public access to the ground floor and the occasional public access to the amenity deck will be managed.
  - e. Staff encourages the applicant to ensure the level of vegetation and water detention of the proposal is comparable to the environmental resources eliminated from the existing site.

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: Nancy Rogo Trainer, Chair, Civic Design Review, nrt23@drexel.edu  
Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, garofalod@rowan.edu  
Councilmember Jamie Gauthier, Jamie.gauthier@phila.gov  
Andrew Goodman, Director of Equitable Development, Andrew.goodman@phila.gov  
Conor McAleer, Kingsessing Spirit, kingsessingspiritco1@gmail.com  
Mary McGettigan, West Philadelphia Neighbors, westphillyplanpreserve@gmail.com  
Denise Furey, 46th Republican Ward, denise.furey@wolfe.org  
Kyle Sampson, West Philadelphia Economic Development Council, publicpolicy@gmx.com  
Catherine Blunt, 46th Ward Democratic Committee, 46wardrco@gmail.com  
Mary Allegra, Garden Court Community Association, Zoning@gardencourtca.org  
Nicole Ozdemir, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Nicole.ozdemir@phila.gov  
Michael L. Prifti, BLT Architects, mlp@blta.com  
Ronald J. Patterson, Esq., Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP, rpatterson@klehr.com  
Caitlin M. Mest, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections, Caitlin.mest@phila.gov  
Chris Renfro, Streets Department, christopher.renfro@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



September 8, 2020

Paulose Isaac  
Zoning examiner, Licenses and Inspections  
Municipal Services Building, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Eleanor Sharpe  
*Executive Director*

Nancy Rogo Trainer, FAIA, AICP  
*Civic Design Review Chair*

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

Leonidas Addimando  
Ashley Di Caro, LEED -AP  
Tavis Dockwiller, RLA  
Michael Johns, FAIA, NOMA, LEED-AP  
Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 1901 N American Street (Application No. ZP-2020-001248)**

Dear Paulose:

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 commercial building for 1901 N American Street.

The project is bound by Berks Street to the south, Philip Street to the east, Norris Street to the North, and American Street to the west. The project proposes 247,665 square feet of residential and retail uses including 268 residential units, 7,767 square feet of retail spaces and 100 parking spaces. The site is zoned ICMX and zoning refusals have been identified for use, parking, and dimensional non-conformities.

The project was first reviewed at the Civic Design Review meeting of August 11. At its meeting of September 8, 2020, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the Civic Design Review process and offered the following comments:

**1. RCO Comments:**

Representatives from Norris Square Community Association and West Girard Progress attended and offered comments on the review process and the project design.

They expressed an appreciation for the additional meetings scheduled by the applicant and that their concerns are being addressed, including questions about parking. They feel that design professionals are listening to the community and the comments raised by the Planning Commission. They look forward to future dialogue, including a community meeting scheduled for September 10.

**2. CDR Committee Comments**

The Committee expressed support for a successful community engagement process. They commented that it is always good when a development team engages, hears the community, and is willing to work on their concerns. They were also encouraged by the commitment to develop affordable housing.

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)





Unless specifically excepted, the committee accepted Planning Commission staff comments which have been incorporated into the text below.

The Committee had questions and comments on some of the landscaping, environmental, and site design elements. They questioned whether there is a sufficient soil base to support the trees and other vegetation shown on the roofs. The committee encouraged that the applicant explore irrigation for the roof gardens and for the planting strips on American Street, which may need support to get established. They also agree with the use of planting strips – they are necessary to support climbing vegetation on garage enclosure walls. The committee also expressed support for getting many more street trees into the project on all frontages. There was a concern raised about the width of the Philip Street sidewalk. The project will maintain the existing 8' sidewalk but the development team is encouraged to increase the sidewalk to the 10' wide minimum standard state in the Complete Streets handbook.

The committee had comments about the building design. They appreciated the use of the varied materials and encouraged the design team to look at each detail of how different materials would connect to each other. They recommended that all materials and construction details be of a consistent quality. They asked that more consideration be given to the maisonettes facing Philip Street and to clarify what pedestrians will see when they walk by, including the avoidance of spandrel or opaque glazing. Clarification is also needed for the access to the maisonettes – can individuals with mobility concerns access the maisonettes through the elevators and hallways of the building?

The Committee raised some concerns about the quality of life for interior units and ground floor elevations facing the long streets. They questioned whether units facing wedge-shaped courtyards would obtain sufficient light and air. There was also a concern with the ground floor elevations of the parking garage enclosure. The committee noted that these are long elevations without an active use for much of their length. This is a particular concern for the American Street frontage, which is more public in nature.

Lastly, the development team is encouraged to achieve more sustainable design metrics and to pursue 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification. Additionally, they are encouraged to explore the possibility of supporting a bicycle share station.

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  
Director of Planning and Zoning

cc: Nancy Rogo Trainer, Chair, Civic Design Review, [nrt23@drexel.edu](mailto:nrt23@drexel.edu)  
Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, [dkgarofalo@gmail.com](mailto:dkgarofalo@gmail.com)  
Councilmember Maria D. Quiñones Sánchez, [maria.q.sanchez@phila.gov](mailto:maria.q.sanchez@phila.gov)  
Sloane Folks, Commercial/Zoning Services Representative, [sloane.folks@phila.gov](mailto:sloane.folks@phila.gov)





Department of Planning and Development

## Civic Design Review

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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Stuart Rosenberg, SgRA Architects, [stuart@sgra.com](mailto:stuart@sgra.com)

Bar Levy, SgRA Architects, [blevy@sgra.com](mailto:blevy@sgra.com)

Hercules Grigos, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLP, [hgrigos@klehr.com](mailto:hgrigos@klehr.com)

Zasha Morales, Norris Square Community Alliance, [zmorales@nscaphila.org](mailto:zmorales@nscaphila.org)

Barbara Pennock, West Girard Progress, [bjchavous@gmail.com](mailto:bjchavous@gmail.com)

James "Bo" McCain, Zulu Nation RCO, [zulunationcdc@gmail.com](mailto:zulunationcdc@gmail.com)

Dave Fecteau, Philadelphia City Planning Commission,

[david.fecteau@phila.gov](mailto:david.fecteau@phila.gov)

Paulose Isaac, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections, [paulose.isaac@phila.gov](mailto:paulose.isaac@phila.gov)

Chris Renfro, Streets Department, [christopher.renfro@phila.gov](mailto:christopher.renfro@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)