



August 14, 2020

Ms. Cheli R. Dahal  
Department of Licenses and Inspections  
Municipal Services Building, Concourse  
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Philadelphia, PA 19102

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Elise Vider

**Re: Civic Design Review for 918-80 N Delaware Avenue (Application No. 1053427)**

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 **918 N Delaware Avenue**.

The proposal is for a large three (3) acre development consisting of five 7-story residential and retail mixed use buildings and one 2-story amenity building situated between Canal Street to the west and Delaware Avenue to the east, Laurel Street to the north and Poplar Street to the south. The project proposes 462 new residential units, 140 surface parking spaces and approximately 26,000 square feet of retail space throughout the site. The site is zoned CMX-3 and the project is by right.

At its meeting of August 11, 2020, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

- 1. RCO Comments - Northern Liberties Neighborhood Association (NLNA)**  
The NLNA representative noted that the community group had several traffic concerns with this proposal. NLNA requested additional review of traffic specifically for turning onto and off of Delaware Avenue. Additionally, the representative noted that more study needed to occur between the shared spaces and plaza areas where pedestrians and vehicular access may conflict. The RCO group was in favor of Canal Street's existing cobblestone material and requested that the street is maintained during and after construction. The NLNA representative noted that any proposed building lights should not impact adjacent neighbors. Finally, the RCO group identified that the 5 buildings looked nearly identical and requested the applicant review varying materials, or coloring to help distinguish the buildings further.
- 2. CDR Committee Comments**  
The CDR Committee was generally in agreement that this was a strong proposal and a good project with much to be commended.

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The CDR Committee did provide several recommendations, specifically:

1. The Committee requested that the ground floor “tucked under” parking spaces in Building A be converted to commercial space. The applicant noted this would trigger a variance and said it could be converted into future retail space, but the committee noted that this doesn’t happen often, and the developer should push to create additional retail space at this location to increase the pedestrian activity on Canal Street.
2. The Committee commented that the project included a well-thought-out planning effort, applauding the applicant for working with various City agencies for a project of this scale. The project was noted as strong with a highly developed aesthetic expression.
3. The CDR Committee noted their disappointment that the existing industrial buildings are being demolished, and thus removing the unique story of Canal Street. One Committee member noted that moving forward the development team needs to create a new story for this unique site, providing opportunities to speak to the history of Canal Street and its importance in both the record of water systems in Philadelphia and the previous industrial neighborhood.
4. The CDR Committee noted that the proposed pedestrian spaces are immensely important for this project, as they define the development’s sense of place within the dense proposal. The spaces between buildings, and the connections to the river are an important aspect to this large scaled proposal. The committee recommended further refining these spaces, looking at removing parking where possible, and considering high quality materials. Additionally, the committee noted that the amenity space in the middle of the project is a great idea and requested exploration of additional space such as a rooftop deck to allow for an even stronger series of outdoor spaces.
5. In addition to the public spaces, the committee asked the applicant to consider additional vegetation for the site, allowing space for full sized canopy trees. Greening elements would soften the hardscape elements of the site, while helping to strengthen the plaza spaces with shade and textures.
6. The committee requested the applicant consider solar options for the new buildings, which would increase locally generated energy and have positive impacts for the broader neighborhood.
7. Lastly, one Committee member requested that the applicant work with the City to reconsider the bike lane on Delaware Avenue during this development. The Committee noted that this portion of the Delaware Avenue bike lane is dangerous as vehicles and loading trucks tend to park in the bike lane. The CDR Committee noted this would be an opportunity to look at parking protected bike lanes moving forward.

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  
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**Re: Civic Design Review for 1620 Sansom Street (Application No. ZP-2020-00646)**

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 **1620 Sansom Street**.

The proposal is for a mixed-use building on Sansom Street, midblock between 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets, with Moravian Street to the south. The project proposes a 27-story tower with 298 residential units at 286,200 new gross square feet. The project also includes 5,200 square feet of ground floor retail space and a 19,600 square feet restaurant space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The building includes 67 below grade parking spaces for residents. The site is zoned CMX-5 and is using the affordable housing bonus. This project is by-right.

At its meeting of August 11, 2020, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

- 1. RCO Comments – Center City Residents Association (CCRA)**  
The RCO representative for CCRA noted that there were favorable responses to this project from attendees. There was no significant opposition to the project. The CCRA representative noted their RCO was pleased with the lively sidewalk activity along Sansom Street, pleased with the substantial contribution to the Housing Trust Fund as part of the affordable housing bonus, and applauded the re-examined access into an underground parking garage. Overall the RCO group was approving of the well-articulated design.
- 2. CDR Committee Comments**  
The CDR Committee and PCPC staff were also generally in favor of the proposal and agreed that it is a well-designed building with much to be commended.

The CDR Committee were pleased to hear that the affordable housing bonus is included as part of the project adding a substantial sum into the fund for this project. There was a request by another RCO representative, from West Girard Progress, that asked the development team to commit to diversity for this project in addition to the housing fund for the bonus. The applicant noted they are committed to diversity and will continue conversations with community groups to best move this forward through completion of the project.

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The CDR Committee and PCPC Staff noted appreciation for the Sansom Street façade and setback allowing for additional sidewalk width along the retail and lobby frontages. While the project does not comply with Complete Streets Standards, the effort was made by the applicant to expand the sidewalk for users and patrons of the retail spaces. The CDR Committee noted the project could be further strengthened with additional street trees along Sansom Street, and recommended using continuous tree pits to allow for full growth of vegetation.

The Committee applauded the sustainable aspects of the design, in particular the blue roof technology.

The CDR Committee did provide several critiques that would help strengthen this already strong proposal, specifically:

Some on the Committee would have liked to see a bit more variation for the Sansom Street façade, noting that Sansom Street's character is composed of a series of small, unique frontages that together create a "quirky" streetscape. The Committee recommended the applicant create a similar series of singular façade treatments, this would allow for more interest, helping to match the existing context of the street. Others on the Committee asked the applicant to consider new variations and colors of brick for each segment of the facade, adding additional articulation and interest along Sansom Street to further this concept.

The Committee also recommended pulling the face of the building further to the south, creating even more relief on the street and allowing for additional outdoor seating opportunities. An additional arcade space of 10-12 feet could double the outdoor seating space and create more of an outdoor and lively streetscape.

Some CDR members also wanted to see more interaction between the restaurant space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and the streetscape. CDR members noted that adding garage doors or larger operable windows can help create an interaction between the building and the street would be preferred, further enhancing the public realm and liveliness of the 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: Nancy Rogo Trainer, Chair, Civic Design Review, nrt23@drexel.edu  
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## Civic Design Review

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**Re: Civic Design Review for 2620 W. Girard Avenue (Application No. ZP-2020-002081)**

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 **2620 W. Girard Avenue**.

The proposal is for the development of a 54,629 sf lot at the corner of 27<sup>th</sup> St and W. Girard Ave. The project proposes three (3) new buildings containing a total of 160 multi-family units, 9,306 sf of ground floor commercial space, 46 vehicle parking spaces, and 56 bicycle parking spaces. The site is zoned CMX-3 and the project is by right.

At its meeting of August 11, 2020, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

1. **RCO Comments – Fairmount Civic Association (FCA)**  
The FCA representative noted support for developing this vacant lot but identified insufficient parking as a primary design issue with this project. There was concern with the large amount of traffic that will be directed to Taney Street. Taney Street is a narrow one-way street that has unsignalized turns onto Girard Avenue. Finally, there was insistence that security cameras be installed within the parking court and pedestrian breezeway.
2. **CDR Committee Comments**  
The CDR Committee was generally in agreement that this was a strong proposal and a good project with much to be commended.

The CDR Committee did provide several specific comments:

- a. The Committee noted that the quad units are very cleverly designed and provide a relatively affordable unit type within a gentrifying neighborhood.
- b. The Committee noted that the parking court should be designed as an amenity with specialty paving, lush landscaping, and maximizing the space between the quad units and the parking spaces.

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- c. The Committee suggested that the Girard Avenue elevation be setback above the third floor to better match the context of surrounding buildings.
- d. The Committee suggested that the quad units have more “verticality” so that they could have the appearance of individual rowhouse buildings. See staff comments below as well.
- e. The Committee implores upon the applicant to hire a local and diverse workforce for this construction project.
- f. The Committee suggested that utility meters be hidden from view along 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Taney Street.
- g. The Committee requested more details regarding retail tenants and how retail spaces will be serviced.
- h. The Committee asked that the applicant continue dialogue with near neighbors to about outstanding design issues.

The CDR affirmed the following staff comments:

- i. Trash collection areas are not indicated on the plans. If outdoor dumpsters are utilized, then they should be located within an enclosure.
- j. Where there are no utility conflicts, staff recommends street trees be planted along Girard Avenue to establish shade canopy on this primary neighborhood commercial corridor (Red Maple as indicated in landscape plan and one additional native species).
- k. Staff commends the large amount of glazing and high-quality facade materials facing the pedestrian plaza.
- l. Building facades on 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Taney Street are monolithic and lack vertical elements and depth that would create the desired rowhouse rhythm and scale.
- m. Sustainable metrics are generally met by the site’s transit-oriented location and the ability to create large amounts of open area on a large site.
- n. PCPC recommends the applicant consider LEED or 3rd party 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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## Civic Design Review

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**Re: Civic Design Review for 7165 Keystone Street (Application No. 1037153)**

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 **7165 Keystone Street**.

The proposal is for a development consisting of a 6-story residential and industrial mixed use building situated between Keystone Street to the northwest, Cottman Avenue to the northeast, and the Amtrak rail corridor to the southeast. The project proposes 106 new residential units, 35 surface parking spaces and approximately 13,600 square feet of industrial space. The site is zoned IRMX and the project is by right.

The project was first heard at the July 14, 2020 CDR meeting and was asked back for a second review. At its meeting of August 11, 2020, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

**1. RCO Comments:**

A representative from Tacony Civic Association (TCA) attended both the July 14<sup>th</sup> and August 11<sup>th</sup> meetings and offered the following comments:

The TCA is excited to see a new project in the neighborhood. At the July 14<sup>th</sup> meeting the RCO representative expressed concerns about parking and asked if the industrial space could be converted to additional parking. The applicant said that this would not be an option.

**2. CDR Committee Comments:**

The CDR Committee was generally in agreement that this was a good proposal but that it did have some weaknesses.

The CDR Committee did provide several recommendations, specifically:

- a. At the July 14<sup>th</sup> meeting the Committee expressed concern about the use of stamped concrete and suggested replacing it with concrete pavers. The applicant incorporated this suggestion into the design presented at the August 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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- b. The Committee stated that the building seemed institutional and out of place in a principally residential neighborhood. They recommended changes to the massing, materials, or vertical rhythm of the building to give it a more residential feel and allow it to fit into the neighborhood better. These recommendations were not incorporated into the final design.
- c. At the July 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, staff recommended including an off-street loading zone, which the Committee supported. The applicant incorporated this suggestion into their August 11<sup>th</sup> design. The Committee appreciated this addition and suggested including a special paving material in the loading zone.
- d. While the applicant met many of the sustainability benchmarks, staff encouraged them in the July 14<sup>th</sup> meeting to meet more under the Energy and Atmosphere metric, and to pursue LEED or 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification. The applicant did not incorporate these suggestions into the August 11<sup>th</sup> presentation. The Committee encouraged the applicant to take the environmental imperative seriously and to incorporate solar power and to protect the southeastern façade from solar exposure.

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  
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