



July 10, 2024

Shakir Cohen
Department of Licenses and Inspections
Municipal Services Building, Concourse
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Civic Design Review for 9125 Academy Road (Application # ZP-2024-005484)

Dear Shakir,

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 educational school building at 9125 Academy Road.

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 three-story elementary school building totaling 141,245 square feet of new gross floor area and 118 vehicular parking spaces within surface parking lots. The parcel is zoned SP-CIV and is a by-right project.

At its meeting of July 2, 2024, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following comments:

RCO/ Council District office Comments:

No RCO / Council District representative was present at the CDR meeting. An email was sent to PCPC staff noting full support for the project.

CDR Committee Comments:

The Committee commended the development team for a high-quality design, seeking LEED gold certification, and for designing all four sides of the building with the same level of detail and materiality. The extensive and diverse landscaping of the site, including the large tree planting beds within the parking lot were also appreciated. It was noted that ample distance between plants and trees be considered for their successful growth. One Committee member expressed appreciation for the proposed open space on the southern portion of the site with the inclusion to celebrate the heritage tree, however they suggested that this be moved further away from the corner for people to use safely. The Committee expressed concerns and recommendations to improve the project, including:

Site Design

- The site design has prioritized automobile access over pedestrians and cyclists creating conflicts between different modes. Better integrate pedestrians and cyclists into the design by:

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Committee**
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Martine Decamp, AICP
Interim Executive Director

Michael Johns, FAIA,
NOMA, LEED-AP
Civic Design Review Chair

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

Ashley Di Caro, LEED -AP
Clarissa Redding, RA
Leonidas Addimando
Tavis Dockwiller, RLA

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- Setting back the sidewalks so that the existing bike lanes along Willits and Academy Roads can be accommodated off street for a safer experience for cyclists.
 - Look into changing the driveway pavement between the pre-K parking and the main exit to something more pedestrian-oriented and adding a raised crosswalk connecting the north side of the building.
 - Widen the walkway between the bus drop off zone and the main entrance as the proposed 10' of walkway may not be enough space for bikers and pedestrians to get to the entrance.
- Use an all-native plant palette.
 - Look into the addition of an informal connection between the school, the existing rec center, and the fields. Utilize the open space marked as "G" on the site plans with additional programming to make that connection work.
 - Add more colorful striping for a playful experience more aligned with the use of the building.
 - Consider improving the green spaces adjacent to the parking lots with additional programming for outdoor classrooms or other learning opportunities.
 - Consider the addition of bike storage on the ground floor in addition to the bike racks outside of the building.

Building Design

- Consider incorporating school colors into the design of the building.
- Ensure that the ADA ramp is fully covered under the proposed canopy.

Parking Design

- Reduce the radii for curb cuts along Willits and Academy Roads to help slow down traffic. Consider additional ways to slow down traffic for the safety of pedestrians. Additionally, continue working with Streets Department and PennDOT to get the proper approvals for the new intersection and curb cuts.
- Consider additional signalization for the site to avoid conflicts.
- Consider pervious pavers for the parking lot or add solar-powered shade structures.
- Consider addition of a bus shelter and other improvements around the existing bus stop on Willits Road.
- Consider the inclusion of EV parking spaces within the parking lot.

Sustainable Design

- Consider the inclusion of a green roof and / or rooftop solar panels.

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.

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Leonidas Addimando
Tavis Dockwiller, RLA



Department of Planning and Development

Civic Design Review

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Sincerely,

Martine Decamp, AICP
Interim Executive Director

cc: Michael Johns, Chair, Civic Design Review, mdesigns@msn.com
Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, dkgarofalo@gmail.com
Councilmember Michael Driscoll, Council District 6, mike.driscoll@phila.gov
Stanley Cywinski, Representative to Council District 6, stan.s.cywinski@phila.gov
Kevin Blackney, Blackney Hayes Architects, kblackney@blackneyhayes.com
Stephanie Boggs-Magagna, Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzburg LLC, sboggs@klehr.com
Thomas Neveil, Northeast Community Civic Alliance, thomas.neveil@gmail.com
Keith F. Davis, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, keith.f.davis@phila.gov
Shakir Cohen, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections, shakir.cohen@phila.gov
Michelle Brisbon, Streets Department, michelle.brisbon@phila.gov
Kisha Duckett, Streets Department, kisha.duckett@phila.gov
Jeanien Wilson, Streets Department, jeanien.wilson@phila.gov
Ben She, Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems, benjamin.she@phila.gov
Jennifer Dougherty, SEPTA Long Range Planning, jdougherty@septa.org
Paula Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, paula.brumbelow@phila.gov

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July 10, 2024

Andrew DiDonato
Department of Licenses and Inspections
Municipal Services Building, Concourse
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Civic Design Review for 7240 State Road (Application # ZP-2024-001039)

Dear Andrew,

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 self-storage facility at 7240 State Road.

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 self-storage building totaling 152,720 square feet with 77 proposed surface parking spaces. The parcel is zoned ICMX (Industrial Commercial Mixed-Use) and is a by-right project.

At its meeting of July 2, 2024, the Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process and offered the following design comments:

RCO/ Council District office Comments:

No RCO or Council District representative was present at the CDR meeting.

CDR Committee Comments:

The CDR Committee noted the proposed use and location of the facility were not impacting a large number of visitors or adjacent residences, but still provided the following comments and feedback.

- Preserve the character and richness of the current building.
- The proposal is suburban in context, consider ways to incorporate more urban design features to mitigate the loss of the building currently on the site.
- ADA access needs to be added from the sidewalk to the entrance of the building.
- Make sure the site is illuminated at night.
- Consider the addition of solar panels on the roof.
- Add exterior bike racks.
- These types of buildings seem to be transitional. This facility could be demolished or have a change of use as the neighborhood changes.
- Make the planting more natural by offsetting the trees and adding more variety of species.
- Use planting plugs rather than seed mix when starting the planting process.
- To reduce heat island effect, add shade structures, reflective pavement, or pervious surfaces in the parking areas.

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- In the drive aisles, ensure that all signs are visible so cars know when they are allowed to make left turns out of the 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,

Martine Decamp, AICP
Interim Executive Director

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cc: Michael Johns, Chair, Civic Design Review, mdesigns@msn.com
Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, dkgarofalo@gmail.com
Councilmember Michael Driscoll, Council District 6, mike.driscoll@phila.gov_
Stanley Cywinski, Representative to Council District 6, stan.s.cywinski@phila.gov
Andrew Lakatosh, 142 Design Group, alakatosh@142dg.com
Carrie Nase-Poust, Fox Rothschild, cnase-poust@foxrothschild.com
Chris Labovitz, Tacony Civic Association, TCAzoning@gmail.com
Michael Gall, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, michael.gall@phila.gov
Andrew DiDonato, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections, andrew.didonato@phila.gov
Michelle Brisbon, Streets Department, michelle.brisbon@phila.gov
Kisha Duckett, Streets Department, kisha.duckett@phila.gov
Jeanien Wilson, Streets Department, jeanien.wilson@phila.gov
Ben She, Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems, benjamin.she@phila.gov
Jennifer Dougherty, SEPTA Long Range Planning, jdougherty@septa.org
Paula Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, paula.brumbelow@phila.gov

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Paulose Issac
Department of Licenses and Inspections
Municipal Services Building, Concourse
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Civic Design Review for 2639 S 58th Street (Application # ZP-2023-010982)

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 affordable housing development at 2639 S 58th 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 81,844 square feet in 5 buildings. These include 64 dwelling units and a 2,285 square foot community center. The site plan accommodates 36 parking spaces and 22 bicycle parking spaces. This project is Phase 1 of the Blossom at Bartram's plan to redevelop the Bartram's Village housing development. The parcel is zoned RMX-3 and is a by-right project.

At its meeting of May 7, 2024, the Civic Design Review Committee voted for the project to return for a second review. The applicant team returned to Civic Design Review on July 2, 2024, without making significant changes. The Civic Design Review Committee completed the CDR process at this meeting and offered the following comments:

RCO Comments: (Empowered CDC)

The RCO representative expressed general support for the project, but with the following concerns:

- The use of vinyl siding for side and rear elevations, suggesting higher quality materials be utilized.
- A lack of green roofs or solar energy generation, and encouraged the applicant team to add more sustainable measures to the project.
- Poor interface with the Buddhist temple adjacent to the site, and;
- Trash enclosures that are too far from some of the housing units.

CDR Committee Comments

Committee members were unanimous in their disappointment that no changes were made for the July 2 CDR presentation. They stated that the proposal, as designed, misses the opportunity to set high standards for what a new affordable community, adjacent to Bartram's Garden, could be. The design team was encouraged to push the envelope of what is possible within PHA and Federal funding limitations and to set the bar higher for later phases of the project. Specific comments made at the first meeting, and reiterated at the second include:

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- The design does not preserve any existing trees. Specifically, behind the western buildings, adjacent to the school.
- The design does not honor adjacency to Buddhist Temple and Bartram's Garden.
- The proposed play area / plaza outside of the community center could be a richer , more engaging and usable space / experience.
- Front yards and covered entries could be used as community spaces – lean into opportunities for informal gathering spaces with landscaping and texture.
- Make sure there is adequate bike parking.
- All sides of the buildings should incorporate higher quality materials: simplification of front facades could save money for replacement of vinyl siding.

Several comments were made pertaining to the new street proposed for the site. As the focal point of the design, CDR members felt it could be strengthened in the following ways:

- The street could be made into a one-way street with parking on both sides.
- The parking lane(s) on the new street should use a different material than the driving lane(s).
- The street should be designed to accommodate mid-block crossings.
- Trees should be spaced 15 feet on-center.

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,

Martine Decamp, AICP
Interim Executive Director

cc: Michael Johns, Chair, Civic Design Review, mdesigns@msn.com
Daniel Garofalo, Vice Chair, Civic Design Review, dkgarofalo@gmail.com
Councilmember Jamie Gauthier, Council District 3, Jamie.Gauthier@phila.gov
Andrew Goodman, Representative to Council District 3, Andrew.Goodman@phila.gov
Lindsey Samsi, Pennrose, lsamsi@pennrose.com
Beth Hale, T&M Associates, ehale@tandmassociates.com
Alan Nochumson, Esquire, Nochumson P.C., alan.nochumson@nochumson.com
Karen Small, Empowered Community Development Corporation, karents54@gmail.com
Michael Ross, Southwest Philadelphia District Services (SWPDS), swpds@aol.com
Craig Melidosian, 40th Ward Republicans, craigsolve@aol.com
Charles Reeves Jr., Tasker-Morris Neighbors Association, creeves.tmna@gmail.com
David Szczepanik, Philly Thrive (SWPDC), thriveswpdc@gmail.com
Paulose Issac, Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections, Paulose.Issac@phila.gov
Nicole Ozdemir, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Nicole.Ozdemir@phila.gov
Michelle Brisbon, Streets Department, michelle.brisbon@phila.gov
Kisha Duckett, Streets Department, kisha.duckett@phila.gov
Jeanien Wilson, Streets Department, jeanien.wilson@phila.gov

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Ben She, Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems, benjamin.she@phila.gov
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