

Subject: Re: Parcels 14 and 15 - Further revised concept plan by CV Properties
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 at 9:44:01 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Lorenzo Apicella
To: Caroline Skuncik
CC: Peter Erhartic, Amber Ilcisko, Sharon Steele

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Apologies, some typos there! They should now be corrected below. Please send along these instead.

On Tue, Jul 23, 2024 at 9:24AM Lorenzo Apicella <apicella@apicellastudio.com> wrote:

Dear Caroline,

Ahead of the next I-195 Commission meeting to discuss the above tomorrow, please see my comments below. As in the past please forward them to the commission members before the meeting. Thankyou.

In my comments on CV Properties' dramatically revised scheme for Parcels 14 and 15 last May, I cautioned that just tweaking it would not adequately address Design Review Panel and neighboring community concerns. Instead, to do justice to this rare park and riverside site in the heart of Providence, I argued for a 'clear-eyed re-assessment of its aims and a bold reconfiguring of its core elements' (i.e a new design).

The JDA remains willing to help do that if we can. We did it most recently with the enthusiastically approved new Integrated Life Sciences Building for Brown University. There we shared our community insights from the outset to prioritize ours and Brown's architectural objectives on a macro level. Once they were in place the excellent design team confidently developed their work in detail, free from the 'too many cooks' problem often associated with multiple design panels and community comments. To make this building a better neighbor for the park and river walk, we would press for it to have a continuous roof rerrace set-back on its south and long east elevations; for its first floor to also be set back for shade and cover and to give it a 'lighter landing' on the ground; for its horizontal floor lines to be emphasised instead of stacked units so that it 'towers less' and 'lies down' more; and for its elbow in plan to be curved rather than sharp to streamline its river facing east elevation.

Sadly, the tweaks of May's revised scheme for Parcels 14 and 15 now under consideration only cosmetically address your initial design panel's and the community's concerns. That is evident in Utile's long list of Conditions for Approval, conditions so numerous that they would seem to disqualify approval.

To conclude, as before I remain supportive of development on this site. And I remain confident that CV Properties and their design team can deliver an elegant contemporary design worthy of its prominent context - one that they, the I-195 Commission, the neighboring community, and Providence can be proud of. That outcome however will require a different design approach, and rather more time to achieve it.

Sincerely,

Lorenzo Apicella, AIA RIBA FRSA
JDA Architecture and Design Representative

3 Ship Street #201
Providence, RI 02903

Subject: Comments on Agenda items 4&5
Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2024 at 3:10:34 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Sharon Steele
To: Caroline Skuncik
CC: Sharon Steele

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Caroline...As per your request, Lorenzo has provided written comments ahead of today's 5PM deadline.

Accordingly, you will find my comments here as well. We both still have questions as to why public comment will not be allowed for agenda item 4 at tomorrow's meeting. Please forward to all the commissioners.

Tim Love's letter of July 11th states that "the goal of the meeting was to review the updated concept plan design proposal for Parcels 14 & 15 and provide our recommendation for the upcoming Commission VOTE." Tim then fills two full pages with specific & detailed conditions which are RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL of this concept design proposal! One would assume that if there are so many conditions yet to be met & demonstrated, why does he recommend approval now, rather than AFTER we see if & how these conditions have been addressed?

Here is some background information...

On Tuesday, June 18th, Lorenzo & I traveled to Boston to meet with the SGA team to discuss the revised plan that had been presented to DDRC on June 10th. Our intention was to demonstrate our willingness to help improve the design of a building that looked like upscale offices rather than a sophisticated apartment complex.. We spent much time discussing the importance of the riverfront site, surrounded by lush park space. Many feel that this location is one of the most significant locations in the entirety of the District! Lorenzo made many suggestions for improving the design while maintaining unit totals. When we left we had some hope that our meeting would have generated further discussion, but that never happened. We never saw any revised designs until Caroline posted these on the website July 19th, which is when she notified Lorenzo.

Sadly, the tweaks we see here & the conditions Tim proposes, do not begin to address what this site requires!

We can do better & we must! As Lorenzo states, Utile's long list of conditions for approval are so numerous that they would seem to disqualify approval! So why are they recommending approval? What are we missing?

Lorenzo says it best..."We need that elegant contemporary design worthy of its prominent context - one that they, the I-195 Commission, the neighboring community, and Providence can be proud of."

Sincerely,

Sharon Steele
President, Jewelry District Association

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Sharon Steele - Sharon Steele Group
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