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November 13, 2026

Caroline Skuncik, Executive Director
I-195 Redevelopment District Commission
225 Dyer Street, Fourth Floor
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Parcel 5 Concept Plan Approval Recommendation

Design Review Panel Contributors:

- Craig Barton, Design Review Panel
- Emily Vogler, Design Review Panel
- Jack Ryan, Design Review Panel
- Tim Love, FAIA, Utile
- Zoë Mueller, AICP, Utile

Dear Caroline,

Utile, the I-195 Redevelopment District's (195 District's) Urban Design and Planning consultant, recommends that the Commission grant Concept Plan Approval for the Providence Art & Design Center (Ionic Development Co. & Wade | Keating) proposal for Parcel 5, with the conditions outlined below. The Providence Art & Design Center team has been responsive and collaborative throughout the process and has put forward a thoughtful design proposal that addresses the issues raised by the Design Review Panel.

Summary of the Design Review Process
Utile and the 195 District Design Review Panel convened on November 5, 2026 to review the Concept Plan Application materials submitted by the Providence Art & Design Center for their proposed mixed-use development on Parcel 5. The Panel previously convened to review the first Concept Plan submission on May 26, 2026 and documented feedback in a memo dated May 29, 2024.[1]

General Comments
The development and design team have demonstrated their commitment to retaining the core program and design features of their original proposal: clusters of steep gabled masonry facades separated by straight-run spans enclosing an intimately scaled interior retail courtyard or "inner street." To be successful the dual design language needs to read clearly and the inner street needs to be inviting and vibrant. This means the entries, dimensions, lighting, and upper story enclosure strategies carry particular significance.

- <u>Building Massing & Materiality</u>
    - The playful gable facade conditions create interest and connect to the context while creating a distinct language. The different facade design

[1] This development began their Design Review process when the 195 District required two stages of Concept Plan review, the first for comments only and the second for approval.

languages have been developed such that they effectively reinforce a larger conceptual framework by using the gable ends to mark significant public entries and the straight spans to provide a backdrop against which they pop.
    - Thoughtful breaks in the ground floor and second story building mass and use of transparency create more generous and welcoming entries to the inner street.

- Public Realm Activation: The legibility of the inner street as part of the public realm as well as the experiential design of the inner street has improved greatly since the initial scheme. The diagonal corner entries are now clearly open and inviting to the public from a distance, ensuring it is perceived to be a public space that encourages cut-through traffic from the corner of Wickenden Street and South Main Street to the Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Bridge.

- Parking Design: The parking deck solution splits the elevation difference, limiting excavation costs and allowing for the inner street to sit a bit higher than South Water Street, which supports views over the tops of cars to the park beyond. By retaining a largely below-grade parking solution with loading accessed off of Dollar Street, the primary frontages are kept pedestrian-oriented and Dollar Street is able to provide consolidated loading access for both Parcels 2 and 5. The curb cut for access to the parking garage is well located along the South Water Street facade.

- Vulnerability to Value Engineering: This iteration of the design reflects progress towards reconciling the core concept with the realities of financial and parking design constraints.
    - While the inset balconies between the gable facades are important because they create the deep shadows that help make the most distinctive aspects of the facade stand out, the balconies on the straight-run facades are less important from an architectural standpoint and could be eliminated, if necessitated by value engineering.
    - Additional resolution of the geometry, material choices, and details are necessary where the mansard and gable roof features come together on the top floor. Decisions about how these geometries intersect need to be clarified and included in the cost model.
    - The variety of materials and colors on the ground floor storefronts, as shown on the renderings, contributes to the positive urban design qualities of the proposal. If costs require these to be rendered in a more uniform treatment, a different strategy may be necessary to achieve the same level of visual interest.

Waivers

No waivers were requested and properly noticed as part of the Concept Plan Application, but the team identified several waivers that they may pursue at the Final Plan approval stage related to parking design, bicycle parking, curb cuts, uninterrupted facades, building entrances, and flood resilience standards.

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1. Parking & Loading Strategy: The development's relatively low on-site vehicular parking ratio of 0.26 spaces/unit needs further justification and a strategy to support alternatives to private vehicle use. Additionally, the amount of retail space shown requires a thoughtful solution to curbside loading.
    a. Prepare a Transportation Demand Management Plan that highlights strategies being used to encourage alternatives to private vehicle use beyond walking such as transit, motorized micro-mobility devices, and bikes. This should take into account the proposed programs for Parcel 2 and Parcels 8 & 8A.
    b. Improve performance of the ground level for bike and micro-mobility device parking, including providing a dimensioned plan-view drawing with clear indication of the intended circulation of cyclists to the exterior uncovered bike parking as well as the bike room on the parking and ground floor levels from the public right-of-way. Clearly indicate where exterior bicycle parking is being provided and demonstrate that bicycle parking provided meets the required number and design standards for both covered long-term spaces and other short-term spaces.
    c. Provide a dimensioned plan-view drawing with clear indication of the intended approach to loading and curbside management for retail tenants and residents moving in and out.

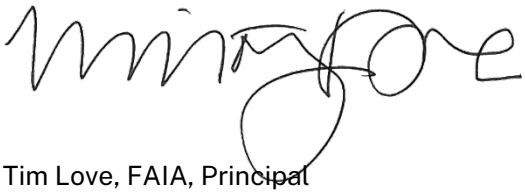
2. Inner Street Experiential Design: The quality of light, planting, and accessibility of the inner street are critical to its success. To demonstrate that these have been successfully resolved,
    a. Confirm the width of the inner street.
    b. Conduct a full-day shadow study of the inner street at the summer and winter solstices and provide a composite diagram for each showing the number of hours of sun received for each area of the inner street.
    c. Prepare a dimensioned drawing of the inner street highlighting seating areas, shade-tolerant planting strategies, lighting strategy, and compliance with ADA accessibility standards in response to the shadow study.

3. Facade Design Refinement: The two facade languages are functioning well as a pair that complement one another. A few remaining refinements will bring this to a more complete resolution:
    a. Continue to explore resolution of top floor facade language where multiple materials and geometries come together, especially where the mansard projects beyond the gable at the outer corners and transitions between the gable language and straight run language.
    b. Study facade material and color strategies to increase the contrast between the mock mansard roof, gable roof, and masonry gabled facades to retain the drama of the original design.
    c. Confirm the strategy to align ground floor design to upper story facade design language to reinforce the distinction and create variety in the

ground floor experience. Elevation and renderings currently show different solutions.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions or would like additional information on any of these comments.

Regards,



Tim Love, FAIA, Principal
Utile

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115 Kingston St.
Boston, MA 02111

110 Union St.
Providence, RI 02903

47 Maple St.
Burlington, VT 05401

(617) 423-7200
utiledesign.com