



May 29, 2026

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

RE: Parcel 5 Concept Plan Review Comments

Design Review Panel Contributors:

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

Dear Caroline,

Utile, the I-195 Redevelopment District’s Urban Design and Planning consultant, has reviewed the Concept Plan application materials provided by the Providence Art & Design Center for Parcel 5. The comments below are meant to inform potential revisions to the design prior to Concept and Final Plan Approval.

Summary of the Design Review Process

Utile and the I-195 Redevelopment District Design Review Panel convened on May 26, 2026 to review the architectural drawings, renderings and building program information presented by the Providence Art & Design Center (Ionic Development Co. & Wade | Keating) for their proposed mixed-use development on Parcel 5. The Panel previously convened on November 18, 2024 to review RFP responses and documented feedback in a memo dated December 4, 2024. The Panel reviewed the submitted documents showing the evolution of the program and design since the RFP stage.

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.

This iteration of the design reflects progress towards reconciling the core concept with the realities of financial and parking design constraints. Three areas would benefit from further study:

1. Legibility of Inner Street as part of the Public Realm: For what is meant to be a publicly accessible pedestrian arcade, there aren’t enough cues to make the Inner Street open and inviting for everyone - it is too hidden in the block. The

diagonal corner entries must be clearly open and inviting to the public from a distance to ensure it is perceived to be a public space that encourages cut-through traffic. While the entry at the corner of Wickenden Street and South Main Street is inviting, there is no way to know that there is an interior court when the building is viewed from the Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Bridge and South Water Street. The parking and upper story residential is creating a closed off, claustrophobic feeling at the Northwest corner of the site where South Water Street and Dollar Street intersect.

2. Experiential Design of Inner Street: The 24' dimension of the inner street creates an intimate scale conducive to vibrant retail on the ground floor but the unbroken six story height on either side and opaque design language of the upper story parking and residential programs could undermine this. The bridge crossing the Inner Street at the center of the project is heavy and opaque, creating the sense of two separate spaces rather than a unified inner courtyard.
3. Facade Design Clarity, Simplicity and Relief: The playful gable facade conditions create interest and connect to the context while creating a distinct language. However, the use of the gables and their relationship to the mansard, ground floor, and straight-run spanning design is more convoluted than the original proposal and as represented in the renderings and elevations, the gable ends seem to be mostly a decorative strategy to break down the scale of the project. The loss of inset balconies is also creating a much flatter facade. The different facade design languages should be used within a larger conceptual framework that clarifies public/private or program distinctions and uses relief thoughtfully.

Suggested Actions to Refine Design

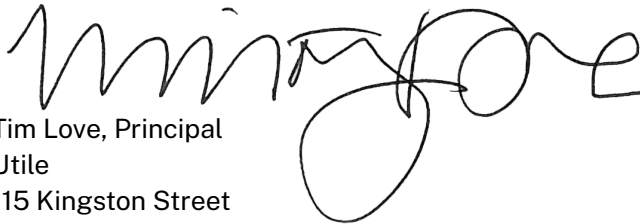
1. Parking Strategy:
 - a. To support the lower on-site vehicular parking ratio, prepare a Transportation Demand Management Plan that highlights strategies being used to encourage alternatives to private vehicle use beyond walking such as transit, motorized micro-mobility devices, and bikes. This should 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.
2. Legibility of Inner Street as part of the Public Realm:
 - a. Study ways to make the entrance to the Inner Street at South Water Street and Dollar Street more inviting and open, including reduction of corner residential units and elimination of parking spaces as needed. Study carving away the mass of the northwest corner of the building, except for glass-enclosed corridors that connect one wing to the other.
3. Inner Street Experiential Design:
 - a. Study a lighter, more transparent treatment of the upper story bridge across the Inner Street, including allowing the parking level to be exposed in order to increase overall transparency.
 - b. Conduct a shadow study of the Inner Street with and without modest carve-outs of the sixth floor program on either side of the bridge to

determine if these create a better balance of openness and enclosure for 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.
4. Clarification and Simplification of Facade Design:
 - a. Concentrate the gabled roof accents at the primary diagonal corner entrances to the Inner Street.
 - b. Avoid superimposing gables on one another.
 - c. Create a more defined distinction between the mansard, gable and ground floor and distinguish that from a simpler, more unified strategy for the straight-run spanning sections.
 - d. Limit the use of the mansard to the gabled sections of the facade. Use a more unified treatment for all upper floors in the straight-run spanning sections.
 - e. Study facade material and color strategies to increase the contrast between the mock mansard roof and masonry gabled facades to retain the drama of the original design.
 - f. Demonstrate a strategy to align ground floor design to upper story facade design language to reinforce the distinction and create variety in the ground floor experience.

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

Regards,



Tim Love, Principal
Utile
115 Kingston Street
Boston, MA 02111