

December 8, 2020

Caroline Skuncik, Executive Director
I-195 Redevelopment District Commission
315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101
Providence, RI 02908

utile

RE: P9 Proposal Design Review Panel Comments
Pennrose Proposal

Design Review Panel Contributors

- Craig Barton, Design Review Panel Member
- Emily Vogler, Design Review Panel Member
- Jack Ryan, Design Review Panel Member
- Tim Love, Utile
- Charlotte Lipschitz, Utile
- Zoe Mueller, Utile

Dear Caroline,

Utile and the newly formed I-195 Redevelopment District Design Review Panel have reviewed the revised architectural drawings and building program information provided by Pennrose. In general, it is a thoughtful and thorough design proposal that includes a helpful level of information. We have provided detailed comments below. They are meant to inform potential revisions to the design during the next steps of the process.

Courtyard and Parking Garage Recommendations

1. In order to eliminate the conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, move the entrances to the garages from the internal courtyard to Alves Way (midway along the building frontage) and Bessie Way (on the far end of the East Building).
 - a. In order to make the garage layout work in the West Building relocate some of the back-of-house functions to the other end of the garage and move the garage space closer to the south face of the building.
 - b. The garage may also need to be shifted to the west, even if it means reducing the size of the abutting commercial space.
 - c. Since the garage entrances have been moved, make interior connections between the building lobbies and enclosed bicycle parking.
2. Redesign the Courtyard as a community space that includes:
 - a. A balance of hard surfaces and plantings
 - b. String lights mounted to the two buildings so they create a virtual ceiling over the space
 - c. A variety of seating options, some with tables and other surfaces. Examples include a combination of painted Adirondack chairs and picnic tables, outdoor lounge seating, etc.

Other Ground Plane and Landscape Design Recommendations

1. Eliminate the patio area that backs up to the garage wall in the West Building and replace it with plantings that step up to conceal most of the wall.
 - a. This revision should be combined with adjustments to the location of the garage in plan, necessary to accommodate the relocated garage entrance.
2. Deploy a more intensive planting strategy between the multi-purpose path (CityWalk) and the blank walls of the East Building.
 - a. The plantings should be step up in two or three narrow tiers, so they hide most of the wall surface (similar in treatment as the one recommended along the blank garage wall of the West Building)
 - b. This same planting strategy should be carried around the far corner of the building and meet the back-of-sidewalk on Bessie Way. Since there is more area between the end wall of the building and the path that connects CityWalk with the sidewalk, the tiers of plantings can be expanded in plan to fill in more of the space.
3. Develop a more intentional strategy for the narrow planting area in front of the ground floor residential units in the East Building.
 - a. Raise the planting beds approximately 8-12"
 - b. Enclose them with a 24" metal fence with dominant verticals that create the density and rhythm of a traditional wrought iron fence
 - c. Plant the planters with medium height perennials such as grasses and herbaceous shrubs.
4. Study the height of the amenity deck of the East Building to make sure there are views of the water over the highway.
 - a. Cut a cross section through the East Building and I-195 to determine their relative heights relative to sightlines to the water sheet.
 - b. If minor adjustments to the level of the deck can improve the views (of a few feet or less), then make adjustments to the deck design.
 - c. If it is determined that moving the amenity deck up one floor would make a big difference in the quality of the views, consider changing the configuration and unit layout of the second floor to be able to make the adjustment.

Unit Layout Recommendations

1. To activate the street and create a more traditional small-scale residential rhythm, convert the three ground level units in the East Building into six duplexes (two level embedded townhouses) that extend up to the second floor of the building.
 - a. This will require adjustments to the layout and unit mix on the second floor.
2. Consider marketing these units as live-work units.

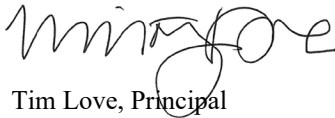
Building Expression and Facade Design Recommendations

1. Use different primary cladding material and window type for the two buildings so they read as different and distinct buildings.
2. Treat the buildings as simple masses without an excessive amount of articulation.
 - a. Continue facade treatments around all of the sides of primary mass, rather than changing them on each face. The inspiration should be simple industrial buildings.
 - b. The one exception might be the end elevations of the Cs of the residential plans on the upper floors.

- c. In the West Building:
 - i. Reduce the special features, keeping only the one at the corner of the courtyard facing Traverse Street. A special feature here does a nice job terminating the view down Traverse Street.
 - ii. Square off the corner at Alves Way and Traverse Street by eliminating the chamfered corner.
 - iii. Reintroduce a differentiated top (“Penthouse”) floor in order to lower the horizontal datum of the building so it relates better to the adjacent church.
- d. In the East Building:
 - i. Make the bays two stories rather than three stories tall, so the facade plane of the building is continuous above the bays. This will help make the building read as a single mass and not a series of chopped up wall planes.
 - ii. Consider making the narrow end of the building the special feature since it will address cars approaching on the highway exit ramp. This element can function as a gateway to the district.
 - iii. Maintain the differentiated upper floor (the penthouse expression).

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