



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CITY COUNCIL

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COUNCILMAN-4TH DISTRICT

July 20, 2006

Mr. Robert Solvibile
Commissioner
Licenses & Inspections
Municipal Services Building
Philadelphia, PA 19102

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Re: Board of Building Standards Hearing on #3 Rector Street

Dear Commissioner Solvibile:

The Manayunk Neighborhood Council is appealing the Historic Commission's approval of the development and design plan for #3 Rector Street to the Board of Building Standards. This plan was approved by the Historic Commission by a vote of 10-0 at their June 9, 2006 meeting. At that time, then-Councilman Nutter attended the Historic Commission's meeting and spoke in support of the plan. I am writing to re-affirm the continued support by this office of the current plan.

By way of brief background, this industrial/warehouse-type building has been vacant since late 1999. During that time, I am not aware of any other potential developers for this property. Switzenbaum & Associates, represented by Mr. David Waxman, began meeting with the community in February 2005. At that time, the initial proposal was for a complete demolition of the existing building and development of new residential units on the site. The community and the Historic Commission were strongly opposed to the demolition.

The developer, then, began work on a revised plan that saved the building, incorporated an overbuild concept, and provided as much parking as possible given the constraints of the building and adjacent properties. There have been numerous changes, compromises and accommodations made to this plan in an effort to address as many community concerns as possible, as well as those design issues raised by members and staff of the Historic Commission.

The present plan and design, which was approved by the Historic Commission, will allow for 22 residential units and 21 parking spaces. All parking is internal; thus no cars will be visible from the towpath view. The Rector Street facade and the canal-side facade are preserved. Landscaping will be provided along the towpath, and balconies on the canal side will compliment the design guidelines developed by the Manayunk Development Corporation for properties opening up onto the canal towpath.

Mr. Robert Solvibile
July 20, 2006
Page Two

In conclusion, this office has supported and continues to support this proposal. Residential development will generate the least amount of traffic, and will insure "eyes and ears" on the towpath. This plan saves an historic building and insures a viable re-use of a long-vacant building.

I respectfully request that you affirm the decision of the Historic Commission and deny this appeal. Thank you for the opportunity to express the views of the 4th Council District Office in this matter.

Sincerely,



Julia Chapman
Chief-of-Staff

cc: Kevin Smith, President, MNC
David Waxman, Switzenbaum & Associates