

# Manayunk Neighborhood Council, PO Box 4667, Philadelphia, PA 19127

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Manayunk Neighborhood Council preliminary position on the Venice One development at 1 Leverington. This document is for the purposes of setting goals for future discussion.

1. This project is in the flood way of the Schuylkill river. Manayunk Neighborhood Council believes that residential is inappropriate and dangerous in the flood way. We would welcome any proposals for any form of development that is not apartments, condos or homes.
2. Despite our opposition, the island has been zoned residential. Given that fact, we believe that development beyond the limitations of that zoning is inappropriate.
3. We object to the development as proposed for the following reasons.
  - a. The development is considerably out of scale, creating a virtual wall over 1000 feet long and 90 feet high. The building will be as tall as the historic railroad bridge and will dwarf the Green Lane bridge and all surrounding buildings. The building creates no connection to modern or historic Manayunk. The building is foreign in scale, materials, and design.
  - b. The buildings will frame the Green Lane gateway to Manayunk. Their uniform height and close spacing and lot coverage and dark brown formica table top cladding will create an absurd juxtaposition with the graceful and majestic bridge. The height and mass will overshadow all surrounding features.
  - c. The development contains no connection to the river, canal, or tow path. The proposed 4 foot path along the rivers edge is wholly inadequate.
  - d. A stairway to the Green Lane bridge, from the island, is not sufficient to promote pedestrian access to and from the development.
  - e. The need for parking, and possibly pollution remediation, has led to virtually all of the lot being paved. There are no ground level amenities for the residents or the community and virtually no green space.
  - f. The extensive lot coverage, by the buildings, has led to the need to raise the buildings 19 feet to accommodate construction and emergency vehicles. At least six feet more than required for flood way regulations and far more than is required for vehicle parking. This has led to a "building on a stick" appearance that cannot be remedied.
  - g. The preponderance of single bedroom units is consistent with a modestly priced rental model. It, along with the lack of resident amenities are not consistent with luxury or high-end condos.
  - h. The additional traffic from this development will significantly increase congestion on the surrounding streets. Our communication with the streets department indicates that congestion cannot be reduced by re-timing the Green Lane and Main Street lights. If any improvements are possible by re-timing the lights at I-76 and Belmont, those improvements will be minimal.

4. We feel the following changes are a good guideline for remedying the above objections. These are not literal demands but they are considerations that must be addressed. Some are more important than others but all are considered significant. We reserve the right to raise additional concerns.
- a. The fourth building, closest to the Green Lane bridge should be removed and the space converted to green space.
  - b. The remaining buildings should be moved further apart to create larger visual corridors from Main Street and the tow path.
  - c. The buildings should be reconfigured or reduced to allow emergency vehicle circulation between the buildings and the canal. The buildings can then be lowered to the minimum height to meet flood way regulations.
  - d. The building height should be reduced to meet the 55' maximum height limitation. This will reduce the buildings to 3-4 stories.
  - e. The buildings should vary in height. Perhaps some negotiation around the 55' height limit is possible to accommodate these variations. Pitched roofs, rather than flat, will contribute significantly to making the buildings compatible or sympathetic to modern and historic Manayunk.
  - f. The cladding system or exterior materials should be reconsidered. We do not believe the proposed cladding can be made to look like anything but a building covered with small plastic panels.
  - g. The buildings should have some three dimensional features such as bay windows to reduce the flat tenement look of the current design.
  - h. The number of units should be reduced to the 100-120 range. The reduction in parking requirements will allow green space between each building and the river.
  - i. The reduction in units will reduce the development's contribution to traffic congestion.
  - j. The development should feature a higher proportion of two bedroom units.
  - k. There should be a pedestrian bridge from the third unit, across the canal, to Main Street. The existing space at the top of the ramp up from the canal to Main Street would be an obvious place to land the bridge. This is in addition to the proposed bridge to Green Lane/Main which should also be built.
  - l. The river walk path should be much wider and should connect to the stairway to Green Lane/Main. The planning currently being done, in conjunction with East Falls, for river access, should be applied here.
  - m. River access amenities for the community should be provided. These could be access to green space on the island, ramps or docks in the river, or other related river access features. The green space near Green Lane could be a publicly accessible park.

Thank you,  
Kevin Smith



President