

Meeting Summary Form to Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA)

Manayunk Neighborhood Council
PO Box 4667
Philadelphia, PA 19127

William Bergman
Chair of the Zoning Board of Adjustment
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard – 11th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

March 14, 2025
Appeal No **ZP-2024-003395**
OPPOSED

Re: RCO Meeting Summary Form
Appeal No **ZP-2024-003395**
Meeting ID **MI-2024-006733**
Permit # ZP-2024-003395
4045-61 Main St.
Hearing March 19, 2025 at 9:30 AM

Dear Chairman Bergman,

Below is the summary of a public community meeting held regarding the above referenced zoning appeal.

Position of MNC: **OPPOSED**

	MNC Members	Other Notified Neighbors	Other attendees
Support	3(*)	0	0
Oppose	12(**)	4	3
Non-Opposed	0	0	0

(*) Two members supporting the project were also Notified Neighbors

() One member opposing the project was also a Notified Neighbor**

Date of Meeting: **January 8, 2025**
Location of the Meeting: **ZOOM**
Participating RCOs: **Manayunk Neighborhood Council**
Number of Attendees: **40 (approximate)**
Letter with Explanation of/Rational for Position Attached? **Yes**

Sincerely,

Kevin Smith, President, Manayunk Neighborhood Council
President

Cc: Councilman Curtis Jones Jr.
Planning Commission - rco.notification@phila.gov
Adam Laver, Attorney for the applicant.

Challenges to Misleading or False Developer Claims

The developer has repeatedly claimed they can't do commercial on the first floor due to repeated flooding. No one questions that. The developer has argued that nobody will walk up stairs to go to a restaurant. That's clearly not true (former Main Street restaurant Hikaru had upstairs dining as do several other establishments) but it is also irrelevant. There are ample opportunities for level access, above the 100 year flood level, from Shurs lane, to commercial (restaurant, office, etc.) space. An opportunity and requirement they are squandering in their proposal.

The developer has repeatedly attempted to justify the unit count based on the asserted complications in finding sufficient parking and having parking split over two stories. This is not a constraint or requirement of the site but a result of their decision to overload the site with 165 units.

While adequate parking is important, the applicant has on several occasions cynically twisted this around to claim the parking justifies the number of units when the reverse is true. In discussions about a project, parking comes into play after first coming to agreement on the other important aspects like height, density, number of units and other factors. It would be disingenuous of them to suggest they were doing this for the community having ignored everything else substantive MNC suggested or asked for.

The larger and denser the development the more difficult are the problems and dangers with flooding.

- This project is proposing a main vehicle entrance on main street which will be subject to flooding. Escape is only through a single lane compromised loading dock. The more vehicles and residents the more complicated and dangerous evacuation will be.
- The propose project puts six million+ dollars worth of cars with thousands of gallons of gas in an enclosed area that floods frequently.
- **Before everyone shouts it won't happen here, we only have to look to Apex at the other end of Main Street which, after three owners, is managed by a firm in California who's response to Hurricane Ida was to send a warning email in the middle of the night resulting in trapped residents and dozens of flooded cars. This was only the most recent example as the property has repeatedly suffered significant damage and losses and tops the list for repetitive losses in the City.**
- **Any claims that risks will be managed and procedures will be in place are purely aspirational and are not legally binding and can, and we would argue should, be disregarded.**

The applicant has argued that such a large building has precedents. Citing long gone industrial buildings and irrelevant features in a misreading and misrepresentation of Manayunk's industrial history. The old industrial buildings were exclusively facing the canal or on Venice Island. Where there was a presence on Main Street it was three-four stories consistent with the rest of the street. Perhaps tongue in cheek, they also referred to an old tank (not in the Historic District, not near this project, and long gone) as some sort of precedent. They did not reference the electrical towers above the railroad tracks or Saint John's steeple though.

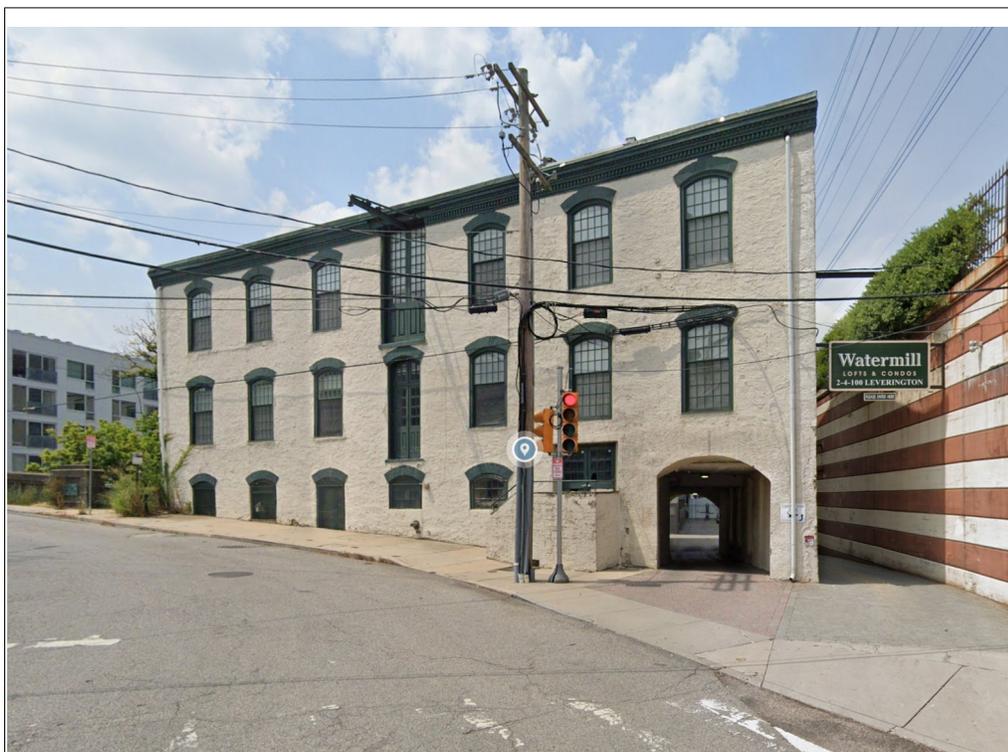


Watermill at Main and Leverington. What the developer want's you to see.

They have also provided, on many occasions a list of other projects they believe are comparable. All of the comparisons are defective in one or more ways.

- Not in the Main Street Historic District.
- Not on Main Street.
- Proposed but not zoned or built.
- Not even in Philadelphia.

One of their examples, Watermill, shows how deceptive their comparisons are.



Watermill at Main and Leverington What you actually see.

Manayunk Historic District Scale and Design

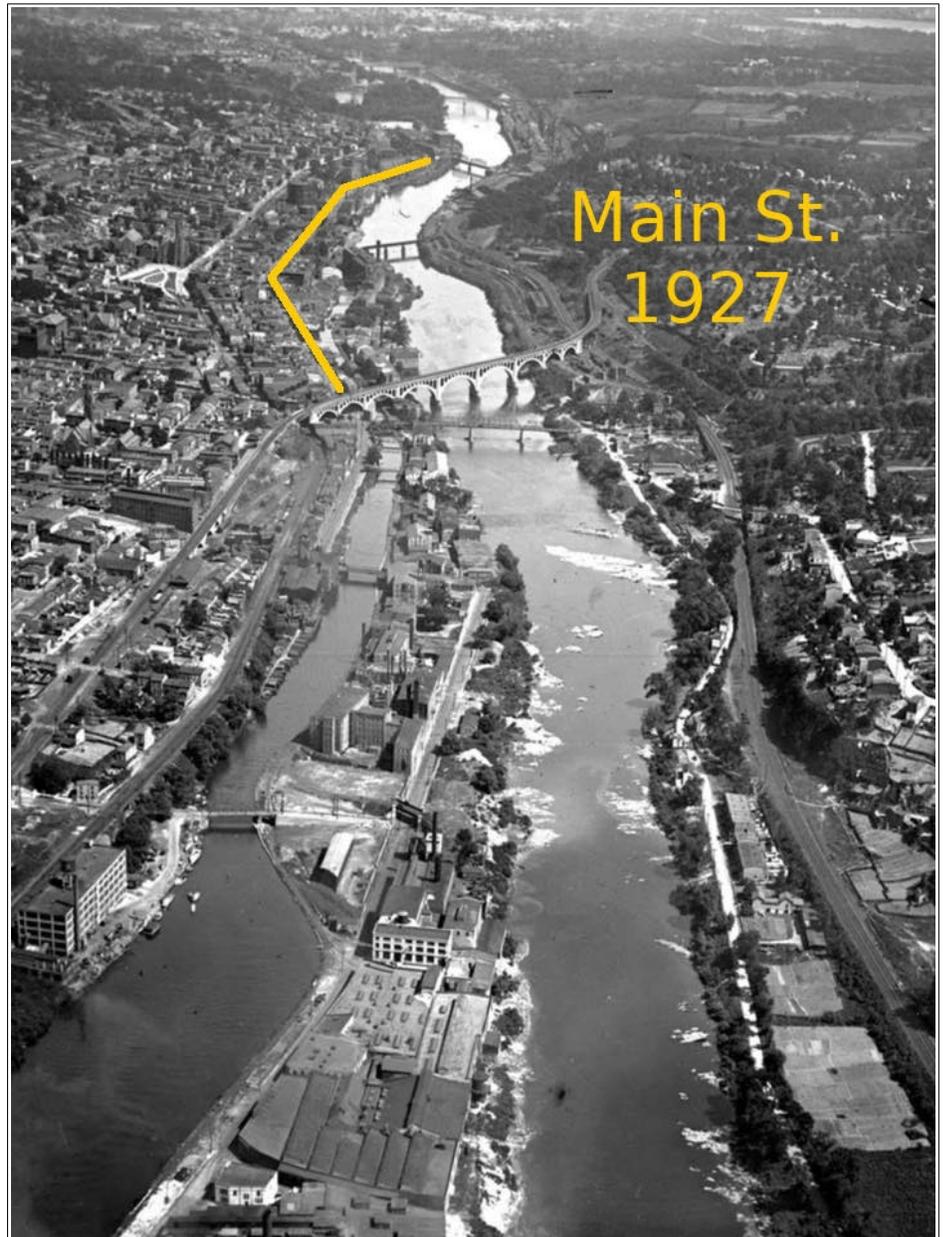
Our comments are straightforward.

- As we show in the following pictures, the building is profoundly out of scale in the Main Street Historic District. It is proposed taller than any other building in Manayunk (including the worst of the new developments). It is more massive than any other building in Manayunk (including the worst of the newer developments)
- The design and scale ignores or trivializes the historic character of Manayunk.
- The token retention of the old facades looks more like a toy train set and serves only to whitewash the disregard of the historic character of Manayunk and preservation of significant historic structures in the rest of the design.

The Main Street Historic District height restriction of 38 feet is from the Design Flood Elevation which is 18 inches above the Base Flood Elevation (flood level of a 100 year flood). For this site that varies from 10 to 14 feet. The project is already starting with a height bonus and they are, for no particular reason, asking for another 30+ feet of height.

While some of the older mills along the Manayunk Canal and on Venice Island were substantial in size, none were as tall, as long, and as wide as this proposed building. The large Richards Apex building, along the canal is only three stories on the Main Street side and is not visible from Main Street. It is still an active industrial site.

Main Street Manayunk, and just off of Main, have several mill buildings that represent the historic character of Manayunk. They are all significantly smaller and only three or four stories on Main Street. There are many examples but the ones below are near by and are representative.





Aerial View looking Northeast

June 25, 2024 | Philadelphia Historical Commission | 4045 Main St

perspectives

Urban Conversions | CBP Architects | 46

Development relative to Main Street looking south



View looking Northwest on Main Street

June 25, 2024 | Philadelphia Historical Commission | 4045 Main St

perspectives

Urban Conversions | CBP Architects | 48

Development relative to Main Street looking north



Main Street Mills 4001 Main, 3901-31 Main Street. A few hundred feet from 4045. Four stories.



4101 Cresson Street. A few hundred feet from 4045. Three stories.



4100 Main Street. Across the street from 4045. Four stories.



4250 Main Street. Three stories.



4001 Main Street. A few hundred feet from 4045. Three and Four stories.