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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 13, 2024

Mr. Justin Keller, Borough Manager
Pottstown Borough
100 East High Street
Pottstown, PA 19464

Re: MCPC #24-002-001
Plan Name: 279 Prospect St Twin Home
(2 units on 2 lots on 0.14 acres)
Situate: 279 Prospect Street
Cross Street: Spruce Street
Pottstown Borough

Dear Mr. Keller:

We have reviewed the above-referenced subdivision and land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on January 4, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, S & P Properties, has submitted a preliminary plan for a subdivision and land development plan. The proposal would subdivide one 0.14 acre lot into two lots and construct two single-family semi-detached (twin) units with decks. Proposed “Lot 1” would be 3,126 square feet and proposed “Lot 2” would be 3,170 square feet.

279 Prospect Street is located in the NR Neighborhood Residential zoning district, which is part of Conservation District zoning. The site is served by public water and sewer. Most of the plan is dated February 13, 2023; the architectural plans is dated July 7, 2023.

CONSISTENCY WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

The proposed improvements are consistent in some ways, but not in others, with *MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision, The Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan (2015)*. The comprehensive plan’s future land use map shows the proposed land development located in the “Town Residential” future land use area. These areas are traditional residential areas that are oriented towards pedestrians more than automobiles. Residential development should match the character and type of housing found in the immediate neighborhood. The homes in the immediate area do not have garages or driveways in front of them. The plan would be more

consistent with *MONTCO 2040* if it was more pedestrian-oriented and did not have driveways and garages in front of the units.

The proposed improvements are consistent in some ways, but not in others, with the *Pottstown Metropolitan Area Regional Comprehensive Plan* (2015). The site is located in the "regional core" future land use area. That area should have a traditional town character with a diverse mix of housing types. The proposal may or may not fit the "traditional town character" description. Although there are homes with driveways in front of units in the neighborhood, generally the homes in the neighborhood have front doors facing the street and no garages, or in some cases, one-car garages, in front of each unit.

The proposed improvements are consistent in some ways with the *Pottstown Borough Comprehensive Plan*. On that plan's future land use map, the development site is located in the Neighborhood Residential future land use area. Development in that area should include single-family semi-detached housing, and infill development is encouraged. Housing unit types should be compatible.

RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) generally supports the applicant's proposal, however, in the course of our review we have identified the following issues that the applicant and borough may wish to consider prior to final plan approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

ZONING

A. Architecture

Design guidelines for new buildings "shall be compatible with surrounding historic homes" with respect to various specified components [§307].

1. Compatibility. The proposed twin dwelling has some similar materials like the surrounding homes, and the proportion of walls to openings may be similar (if counting garage doors). However, the proposed number of stories (2.5) differs from the surrounding 1-to-1.5 story homes and the base, body, and cap vary from existing homes on the block. The proposed home would have garages at its base, while existing homes have doors and windows in their base [§307, §311].
2. Driveway and Garage. We recommend that high windows or other fenestration be added to the garage doors, providing visual interest and making them less dissimilar to the architecture of existing homes on the block.
3. Walls-to-Openings Proportion. The front façade of a new building must have a proportion of wall-to-opening ranging from two to one to one to one [§312]. What is the proportion of the proposed and existing homes?
4. Building Materials. A description of the building materials is required [§400.4.E].

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

A. Landscaping

1. Landscaping Plan - This shall be submitted with each site plan application [A509].
2. Street Tree - For street frontages of 40 to 59 feet, two street trees are required [§505].

B. Driveways

Driveways shall be located two feet from the side property line. It appears as if the distance between the two driveways is less than four feet [§A527.1].

C. Provision of Open Space

Applicants shall provide land for open space and recreational facilities, or, subject to the discretion of Borough Council, an applicant may elect to contribute a fee in lieu of dedication of such land [§A505].

D. Plan Stage

The applicant's plan is called "Minor Subdivision Plan;" the name should indicate that it is a land development as well [§1200].

OTHER REQUIRED PLAN INFORMATION

A. Off-Site Features

The plan shall show physical features and topography on the property surrounding the subject parcel for a distance of 100 feet, unless a greater distance is deemed necessary by the Zoning Officer because of unconventional topographic conditions [§400.3].

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve the borough's planning objectives for residential development.

Please note that the review comments and recommendations contained in this report are advisory to the municipality and final disposition for the approval of any proposal will be made by the municipality.

Should the governing body approve a final plat of this proposal, the applicant must present the plan to our office for seal and signature prior to recording with the Recorder of Deeds office. A paper copy bearing the municipal seal and signature of approval must be supplied for our files.

Please print the assigned MCPC number (24-002-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



Michael Narcowich, AICP, Community Planning Assistant Manager II
michael.narcowich@montgomerycountypa.gov – 610-278-5238

c: S & P Properties, Attn: Stuart Miller, Applicant
Jim Derr, Chair, Borough Planning Commission
Keith Place, Borough Director of Licensing and Inspection
Winter Stokes, Borough Zoning Officer
Charles D. Garner, Jr., Borough Solicitor

Attachment A: Aerial Image of Site
Attachment B: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Proposed Site Plan

ATTACHMENT A



279 Prospect Street Twin Home
MCPC#240002001

Montgomery County Planning Commission

0 50 100 200 Feet

N

ATTACHMENT B

