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MONTGOMERY COUNTY • PO BOX 311
NORRISTOWN, PA 19404-0311

610-278-3722
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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

Re: MCPC #24-0046-001
Plan Name: High Street Commons
(11 units and 3,421 square feet of development on 1 lots of 0.11 acres)
Density: 100 dwelling units per acre
Location: 305 East High Street
Cross Street: North Charlotte Street
Pottstown Borough

Dear Mr. Keller:

We have reviewed the above-referenced land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on February 23, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Lastick Acquisitions, LLC, has submitted a preliminary land development plan for a renovated 21,080 square foot building[1]. The applicant proposes to construct a 6,130 square foot second-floor addition. The existing building is two stories along High Street and one story in the rest of the building. The building would include eleven apartments: four on the first floor and seven on the second floor; retail space on the ground floor; and underground parking.

The site is located in the D Downtown zoning district, which is part of the Conservation zoning district. Public water and sewer are present in this location and the applicant states that the new building will utilize existing water and sewer infrastructure, although the plans do not show connections to the building.

The applicant received zoning variances on January 24, 2024 from Sections 320, 600, and 601 to use the first floor of the building for no less than 42 percent nonresidential use and to provide no less than 15 off-street parking spaces in the basement. The plan is dated November 30, 2023.

[1] According to Montgomery County Board of Assessment, the gross building area of the existing warehouse is 21,180 square feet.

CONSISTENCY WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

The proposed plan is generally consistent with "MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision, The Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan (2015)." The plan's future land use map shows the proposed subdivision located in the "Town Center" future land use area. Primary uses in this area include traditional downtown retail and mixed use buildings, including high-density residential development.

The development site is located in the "regional core" future land use area of the "Pottstown Metropolitan Area Regional Comprehensive Plan" (2015). The plan notes that the regional core has a traditional town character with high-density residential, retail, and mixed-use development.

The proposed plan is generally consistent with the "Pottstown Borough Comprehensive Plan" (2014). In that plan's future land use map, the development site is located in the Mixed Use future land use area, which includes retail and higher-density residential uses. The emphasis is on development that maintains and enhances the area's existing historic architecture and character.

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

BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN

A. Facade

1. To be compatible with Pottstown's existing buildings, facades should have wall-to-openings ratios between two-to-one and one-to-one [§304.2]. It does not appear as if the Charlotte Street façade would meet this requirement, although the proposed addition of windows would move the façade closer to compliance.

B. Size

The applicant shall demonstrate how the proposal would comply with building size requirements [§309], or demonstrate to the satisfaction of Borough Council that building a larger structure will be compatible with the existing buildings on the block regarding certain architectural features listed in §309.4.

C. Parking

All dead-end parking lots shall be designed to provide sufficient back-up area for the end stalls [A528].

LANDSCAPING

Street Trees [§503, §505, A404.18]

One street tree is required for every 30 feet of frontage, with an average spacing of at least one tree per 30 feet. There are four existing street trees along the frontage; three more (a total of eight, rounded up from 7.45) are required.

Wherever possible, there shall be a planting strip [21-202]. If the construction and installation of a planting strip in accordance with the code is not possible, then individual tree wells shall be created in accordance with §21-206, Street Tree Wells. The width of a planting strip or tree well in a concrete sidewalk shall be a minimum of four feet and a maximum of six feet wide [§505.2, A525.2]. Sidewalks shall have a clear width of at least four feet, six inches [A525].

OPEN SPACE

Land for Open Space and Recreation

Land shall be provided or an applicant may elect to provide a fee-in-lieu [A504, A505]. 0.1664 acres of land would be required (.1364 acres for the proposed new residential units and .03 acres for the proposed nonresidential space).

OTHER

Dumpsters and Solid Waste Storage

There are screening, gating, and location requirements for dumpsters and solid waste storage containers. Where will the dumpster and/or other waste containers be located? It appears as if in the photo below, they were located in the alcove. That location would become the access point to the underground garage after land development, however [§507.5, §510.F, A404.16].

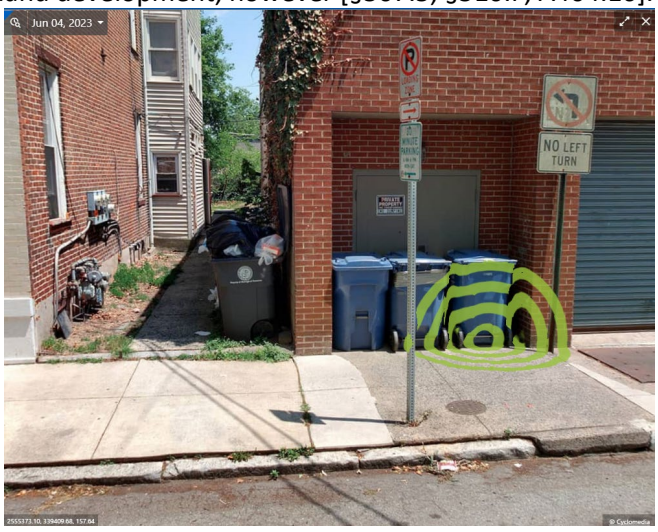


Image from June 2023, Cyclomedia

OTHER PLAN INFORMATION

Following is information

A. Dimensional lines to existing building on adjacent properties [§400.4.A]

B. Zoning district boundary lines [A401, A402]. The site abuts the TTN Traditional Town Neighborhood zoning district.

C. Proposed sewer and water lines [A406]. These are not shown connecting to the building.

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 mixed-use 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 (24-0046-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



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

c: Lastick Acquisitions, LLC, 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



Montgomery County Planning Commission
Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
PO Box 311 Norristown PA 19404-0311
(p) 610 278-3722 (f) 610 278-3941
www.montcopa.org/plancom
Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

0 50 100 200 Feet

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MCPC#240045001

ATTACHMENT B

