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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 19, 2024

Mr. Paul Purtell, Director, Planning, Zoning & Inspections
Upper Moreland Township
117 Park Avenue
Willow Grove, Pennsylvania 19090-3215

Re: MCPC # 23-0031-003
Plan Name: 2300 Computer Ave Apartments
(272 dwelling units on 3 parcels comprising approximately 12.06 acres, or approximately 21.72 dus/acre)
Situate: 2300 Computer Avenue (cross street: Blair Mill Road)
Upper Moreland Township

Dear Mr. Purtell:

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 March 5, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, BT Blair, LLC, is proposing to develop a 262-unit multi-family development. The proposed development would consist of seven 10-unit buildings located around a centrally located four-story building with 192 units. The proposal also includes amenities for residents, including a clubhouse and pool. The applicant is proposing 406 off-street parking spaces (84 garage and 322 surface parking spaces). In addition, the proposal includes a large stormwater basin in the western portion of the property. Driveway access would be provided from Blair Mill Road and Computer Avenue. The property currently contains an existing office complex and wooded area along Blair Mill Road, which would be demolished with the development.

Apartments are permitted in the I-Industrial District by conditional use approval. The applicant received conditional use approval to develop an Apartment Complex, as well as to increase the density through bonus provisions.

We reviewed a previously submitted proposal for this site, as well as a proposed zoning map amendment associated with this site, in letters dated April 21, 2023; and September 29, 2023.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

A. *MONTCO* 2040 – The proposal is generally consistent with the county's comprehensive plan*, MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision,* which shows the proposed area as "Business Area" future land use category. Business Areas are concentrations of employment-oriented land uses. Residential uses in Business Areas should not be placed next to industrial uses that might create nuisances for the residents.

B. *Upper Moreland 2040* Comprehensive Plan – The proposal is located in the "Employment Center" future land use category of the township comprehensive plan. The future land use plan states that appropriate uses include industrial, office, research and development, and multifamily residential. Pedestrian connections are important for this area and should support the future expansion of the Power Line and Cross County Trails.

RECOMMENDATION

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

REVIEW COMMENTS

GENERAL COMMENTS

We feel that the proposed development is an intense use of the site. We wish to reiterate comments and recommendations from our previous review letters intended to help mitigate the bulk of the buildings and to achieve a more livable, human-scale development.

SITE DESIGN

The proposed site design appears to create a development primarily designed for the circulation and parking of vehicles around buildings, which reduces the space available for open space and gathering space for people. In order to create more green space, open space and common space, the applicant may want to consider some structured parking for the development.

A. Landscaping. We note that the applicant appears to have added more trees and landscaping to the site plan, which we commend. The additional trees around the buildings and sidewalk will help to soften the appearance of large buildings and add shade and greenery to the development.

   1. We reiterate our recommendation that the applicant consider efforts to minimize the destruction of existing trees. One of the criteria listed for the conditional use requires that the developer "preserve existing" or "incorporate new natural features, such as trees, streams and open space areas" (§ 350-102.V(1)(p).

B. Stormwater Management. Portions of the property are heavily wooded. The proposed development would strip the site of mature trees and existing natural features. The portion of the property that is currently wooded would be the location of the proposed stormwater basin. We recommend planting some of the required replacement trees (as per § 300-45) on the floor of the basin near the sloped area. Planting groupings of trees and shrubs within the basin will help to improve the naturalized appearance and support a meadow environment.

C. Pedestrian Connectivity. The proposal would include a sidewalk that wraps around the central building. Each of the proposed perimeter buildings would have parking spaces/garages with dividing bump-outs facing the central building. In addition, pedestrian connections are proposed between the buildings, parking areas, and to the sidewalk on Computer Avenue, which we commend. However, there are no sidewalks along the internal frontage of the perimeter buildings, and no designated crossings from the perimeter buildings to the central building where the resident amenities are located.

1. Sidewalks on Blair Mill Road. We encourage the applicant to install a sidewalk along the Blair Mill Road property frontage to help build the pedestrian network and connections to country trails.

2. Internal Connections. We strongly encourage the applicant to install sidewalks to complete gaps in the pedestrian connections from the internal site to the sidewalk along Computer Avenue, as illustrated in the attachment at the end of this letter. Recommended crosswalk locations are illustrated in the attachment at the end of this letter.

3. Accessible Circulation. Based on the plan submitted, the applicant is proposing to provide an ADA-accessible route from Computer Avenue, through the parking lot, and to the entrance of the main central building/clubhouse. However, the ADA path does not address the rest of the site. We strongly encourage the applicant to create more ADA-accessible routes throughout the site to ensure internal connectivity for all levels of mobility.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Upper Moreland's planning objectives for residential development in the Maryland Road and Computer Avenue area.

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 (23-0031-003) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

Claire Warner, Senior Community Planner
Claire.Warner@montgomerycountypa.gov – 610-278-3755

c: BT Blair, LLC c/o BET Investments, Applicant
Klehr, Harrison, Harvey, Brazburg LLP, Applicant's Representative
George J. Hartman III, Bohler Engineering, Applicant's Engineer
Matt Candland, Manager, Upper Moreland Township
Jennifer Mullen, APA Vice Chair, Upper Moreland Township

Attachment A: Aerial Image of Site
Attachment B: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Proposed Site Plan
Attachment C: Recommended Locations for Additional Pedestrian Sidewalks and Crosswalks

ATTACHMENTS A, B, & C



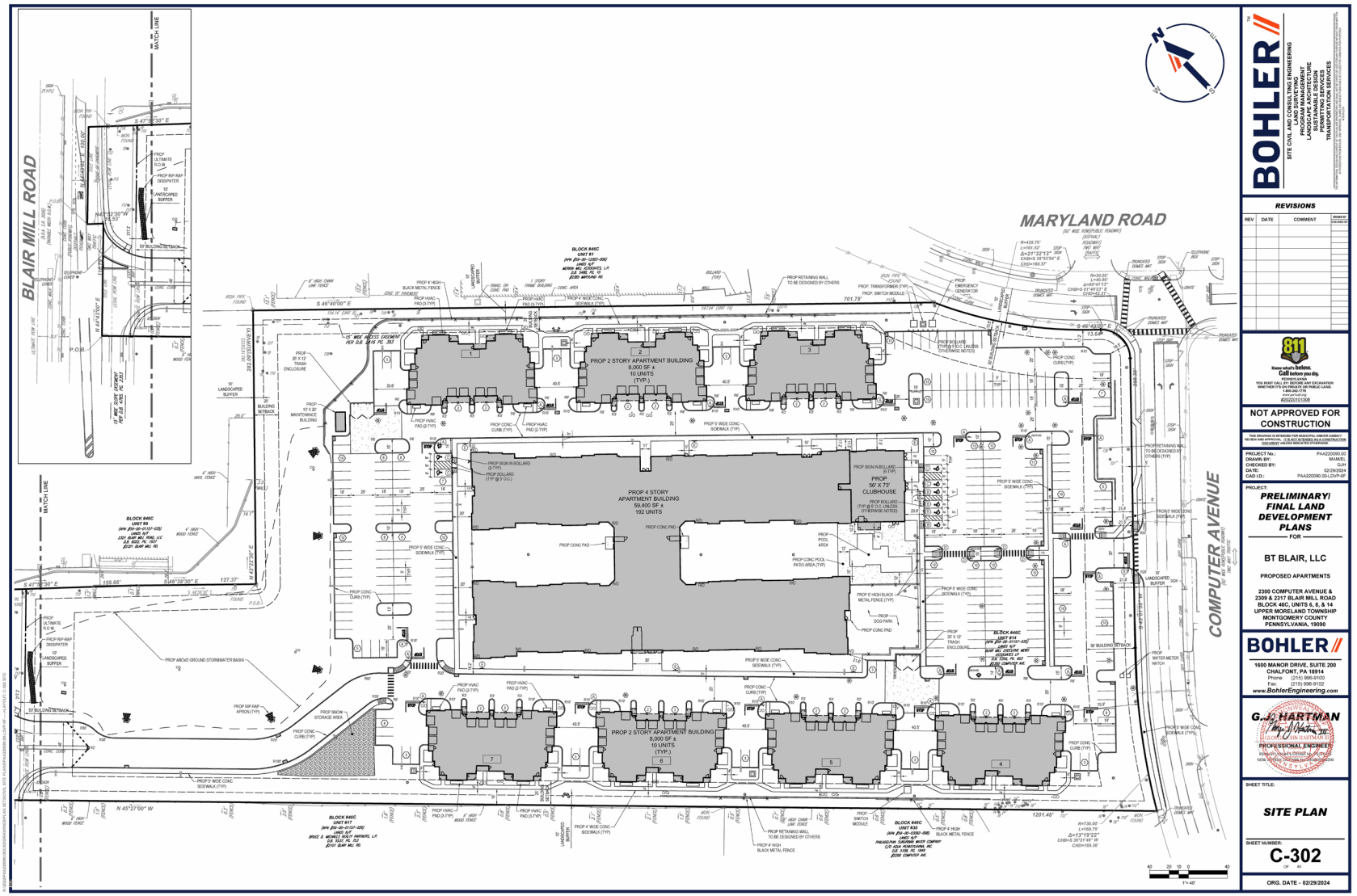
2300 Computer Avenue Apartments
MCPC#230031003

Montgomery County Planning Commission

0 100 200 400 Feet

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Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
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(p) 610 278-3722 (f) 610 278-3941
www.montcopa.org/plancom
Aerial photography provided by Nearmap



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PROJECT No.:	PAA220060.00
DRAWN BY:	MAMEL
CHECKED BY:	GJH
DATE:	02/29/2024
CAD I.D.:	PAA220060.00-LDVP-0F

PROJECT:

PRELIMINARY/ FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS

FOR

BT BLAIR, LLC

PROPOSED APARTMENTS

2300 COMPUTER AVENUE &
2309 & 2317 BLAIR MILL ROAD
BLOCK 46C, UNITS 6, 8, & 14
UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA, 19090

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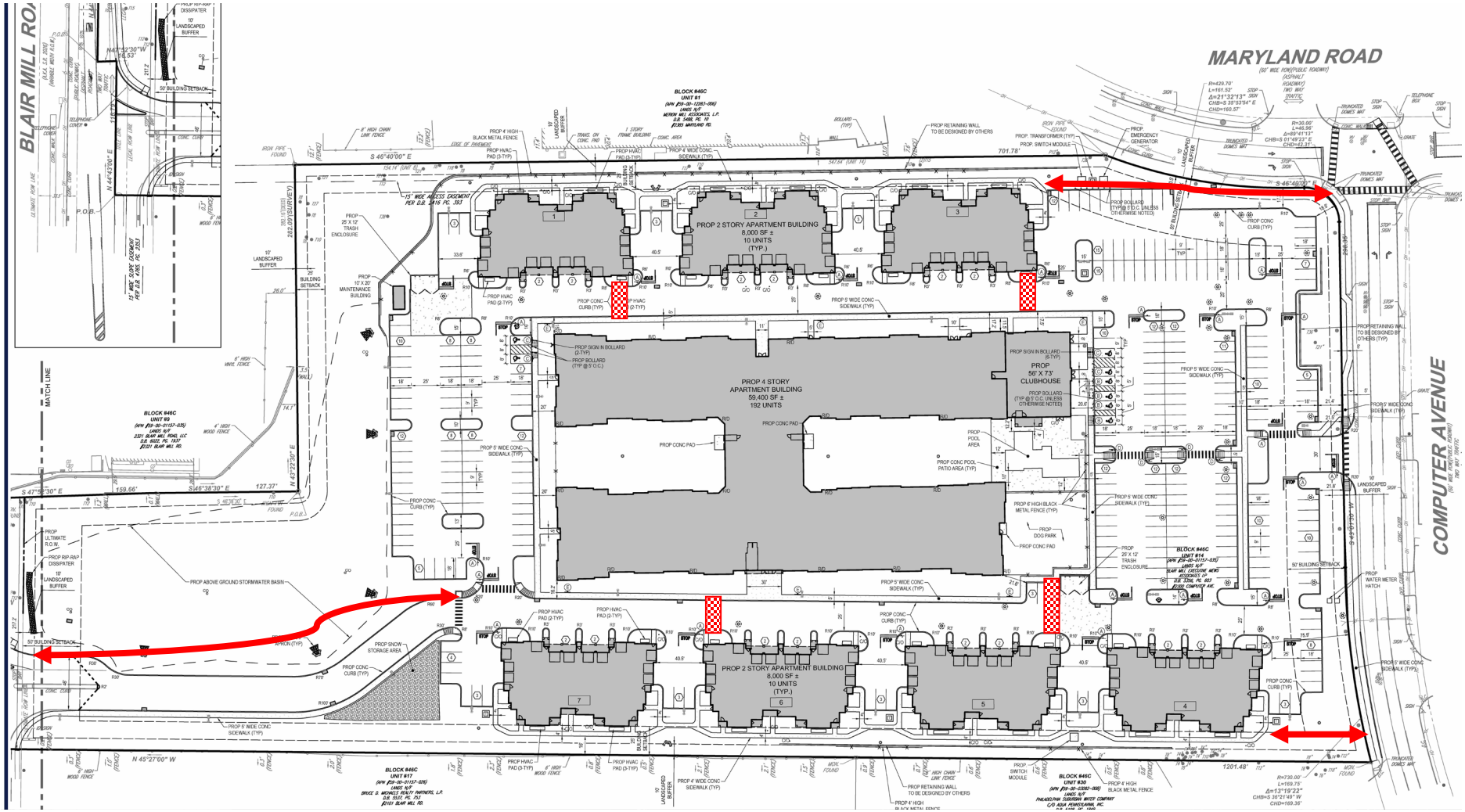
SHEET TITLE:

SITE PLAN

SHEET NUMBER:

C-302

ORG. DATE - 02/29/2024


MARYLAND ROAD
COMPUTER AVENUE
BLAIR MILL ROAD
PROP 2 STORY APARTMENT BUILDING
8,000 SF ±
10 UNITS
(TYP.)
PROP 4 STORY
APARTMENT BUILDING
59,400 SF ±
192 UNITS
PROP
56' X 73'
CLUBHOUSE
PROP 2 STORY APARTMENT BUILDING
8,000 SF ±
10 UNITS
(TYP.)
PROP ABOVE GROUND STORMWATER BASIN
MATCH LINE
P.O.B.
S 46°40'00" E
N 45°27'00" W
S 47°59'30" E
S 46°38'30" E
N 45°23'30" E
N 44°43'30" E
N 44°32'30" W
701.78'
1201.48'
127.37'
159.66'