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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 29, 2025

Ms. Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning and Development
Municipality of Norristown
235 East Airy Street
Norristown, Pennsylvania 19401-5048

Re: MCPC #25-0142-001
Plan Name: 902 Violet Street
(5 lots comprising 0.24 acres)
Situate: Violet Street (west) and East Elm Street (south)
Municipality of Norristown

Dear Ms. Musonye:

We have reviewed the above-referenced sketch plan for subdivision/land development as you requested on July 14, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Benjamin Estepani, representative for SCS Capital Investments, LLC, proposes to redevelop a parcel located within the municipality's R-2 Residential Zoning District that currently features a single-family detached dwelling. The proposal would subdivide the lot to accommodate five rowhouses. This parcel is bordered by Jacoby Street, a paper street, to the south.

The following variances have been granted at the Norristown Zoning Hearing Board's meeting on May 16, 2025:

- Zoning Code Section 320-42-42.B(1) for Dimensional Criteria with regard to lot area, lot width, side yard setbacks, and rear yard setbacks;
- Sections 320-262.A.(1) and (4) to permit parking in the front yard.

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 the municipality may wish to consider prior to preliminary plan review. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

DWELLING TYPE

On the "Request for Sketch Plan Review" to Norristown, the applicant proposes "new construction of five (5) rowhome units…". Per the Municipality's Zoning Code, Section 320-11, Definitions, the units proposed meet the definition of Townhouse, which is defined in Article II of the Municipal Zoning Code as being "not less than 20 feet in width." Townhouse is not a permitted use in the R-2 Residential zoning district. We ask the applicant to consider whether the width of the units could be modified prior to making an official Preliminary Plan submission. Alternatively, if such a modification is not possible at this stage, we recommend that the municipality require the applicant to seek a variance for Section 320-41.A., Permitted Uses, to allow the townhouses proposed in the R-2 district.

PROPERTY BOUNDARY

The sketch plan indicates that the sidewalk along Violet Street lies outside of the property boundary. The plan also indicates that no sidewalk exists in front of the existing house, which contradicts what is shown on an aerial image of the property. The legal description in the deed cited as the source for the survey (Deed Book 6238 at Page 483) is based on a survey from 1917 that identifies a corner of the property "on the Southeast side of Violet Street, at the distance of One Hundred Forty feet from the South corner of [East] Elm and Violet Streets…". Based off an aerial measurement, it appears that the measurements used to develop the plan use the corner of the *property* located at 500 Elm Street, not the *right-of-way* of Violet and Elm Streets. We ask the municipality to confirm the legal rights-of-way for Violet and East Elm Streets and if possible, clarify the location of the south corner of East Elm and Violet Streets using historical maps to inform the accuracy of the survey's starting point.

SIDEWALK

It is noted that a sidewalk gap exists for a portion of this property and the adjacent property at 906 Violet Street. Property redevelopment is one of the most effective ways to fill in gaps in the sidewalk network. Per Zoning Code Section 320-263, Sidewalks, "The area between the front facade and the curbline of the street shall include a sidewalk as defined in [Section 282-] 414 of the Municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) and shall be free and clear of any and all obstacles to pedestrian circulation caused by the property owner."

We strongly recommend that the municipality requires the applicant to construct a sidewalk along the property's frontage along Violet Street in support of pedestrian circulation and accessibility.

LANDSCAPING

Section 282-433.1.A of the Municipal Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) requires a landscaping plan to be submitted as part of the Preliminary Plan submission. In preparation for an official Preliminary Plan submission and, we provide the following comments for the municipality's and the applicant's consideration:

A. Buffers - SALDO Section 282-433.2.A.3) and 4) requires a buffer planting for all residential infill and single-family attached development. Since there is limited opportunity for buffer plantings along the side yards due to the variance granted, we suggest a stormwater control measure that incorporates vegetation be considered for the rear yards of the proposed properties while also serving as a screening buffer for the property located adjacent to the rear yard at 849 Thomas Street. A variety of native shrubs or small trees are recommended, as roots for large trees could affect the foundation of the dwelling at 849 Thomas Street.

B. Street Trees - We encourage the municipality to require that the applicant provide street trees along Violet Street and in accordance with SALDO Section 282-433.3. The reconfiguration proposed in the "Driveways" comment below could be a way to better accommodate street trees.

C. Replacement for Tree Removal/Fee-in-Lieu - It appears that several mature trees will need to be removed to accommodate construction. Per Section 282-433.C.5).c of the SALDO, "If the site does not reasonably contain enough room for the required replacement trees, the governing body may accept an equivalent fee-in-lieu-of-plantings contribution for the Municipal Shade Tree Planting Fund." Since the subject is across Violet Street from Norristown's Scag Cottman Park, we ask the municipality to require a fee-in-lieu contribution that will be used to plant trees in Scag Cottman Park.

DRIVEWAYS

As viewed from Violet Street, the sketch plan locates driveways on the right side of each proposed unit. The applicant could create a space for two street tree plantings and on-street parking by pairing driveways adjacent to each other for two sets of units. Street tree plantings would help offset the effects of the increase in impervious surface and reduce the urban heat island effect. We ask the municipality to encourage the applicant to evaluate a redesign of the driveway (and garage) locations to accommodate street tree plantings since there is minimal space available to incorporate greening on this site due to the variances granted.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The municipality is subject to Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) regulations. Because there will be less than one acre of earth disturbance, the project will not require a review by the Montgomery County Conservation District for an NPDES permit; however, we ask the municipal engineer to work with the applicant to develop a stormwater management plan and maintenance plan that will mitigate the increased runoff generated from the additional impervious coverage proposed in order to meet the requirements of the stormwater management ordinance provisions in Chapter 276 of the Municipal Code.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC supports the applicant's sketch plan proposal, but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Norristown's objectives for residential redevelopment.

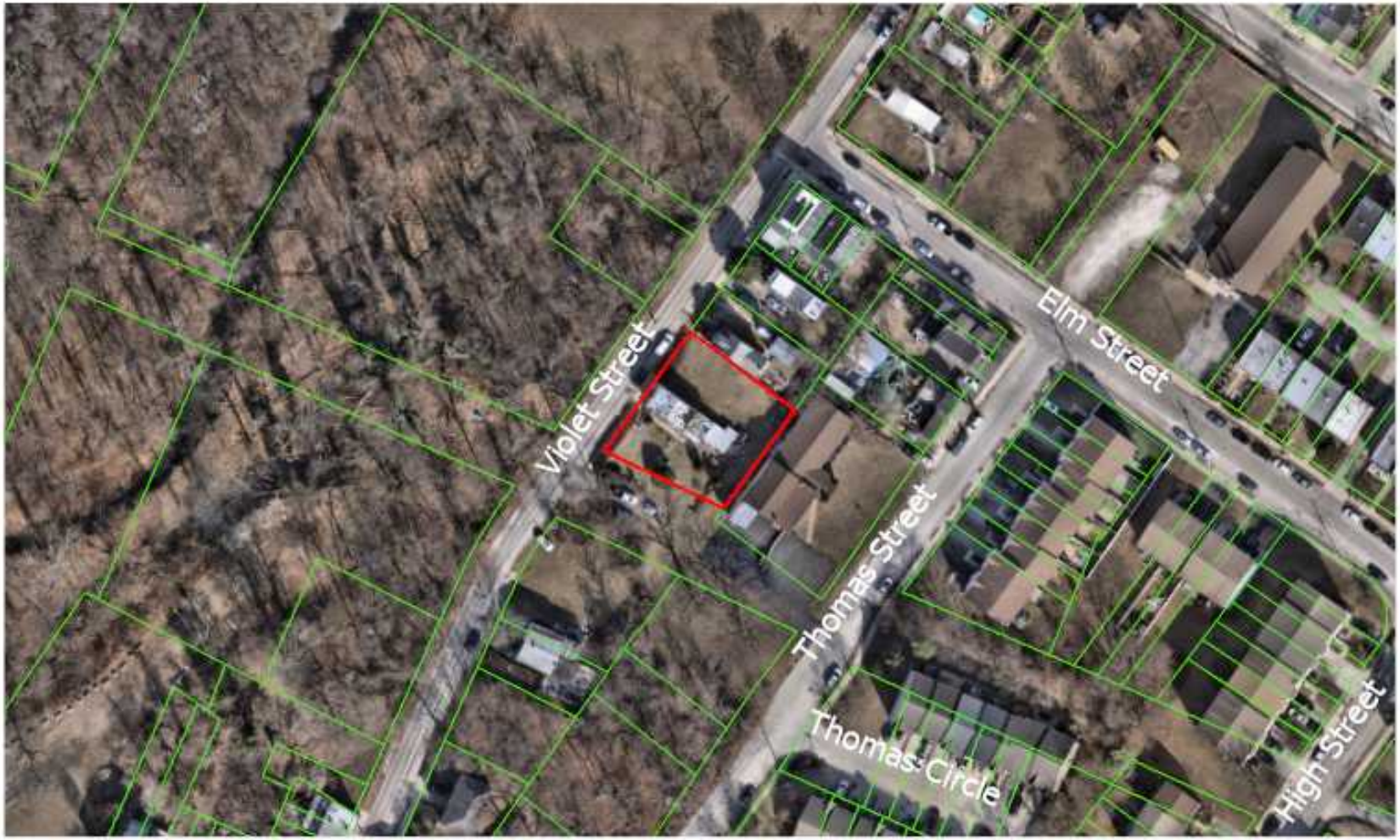
Please note that this proposal requires a preliminary review submission to the Montgomery County Planning Commission prior to final approval by the municipality.

Sincerely,

Donna Fabry, CFM, Principal Trails and Open Space Planner
dfabry@montcopa.org – 610-278-3445

c: Rashad Bates, Chair, Municipal Planning Commission
Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor
Khaled Hassan, PE, Municipal Engineer

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



902 Violet Street
MCPC#250142001

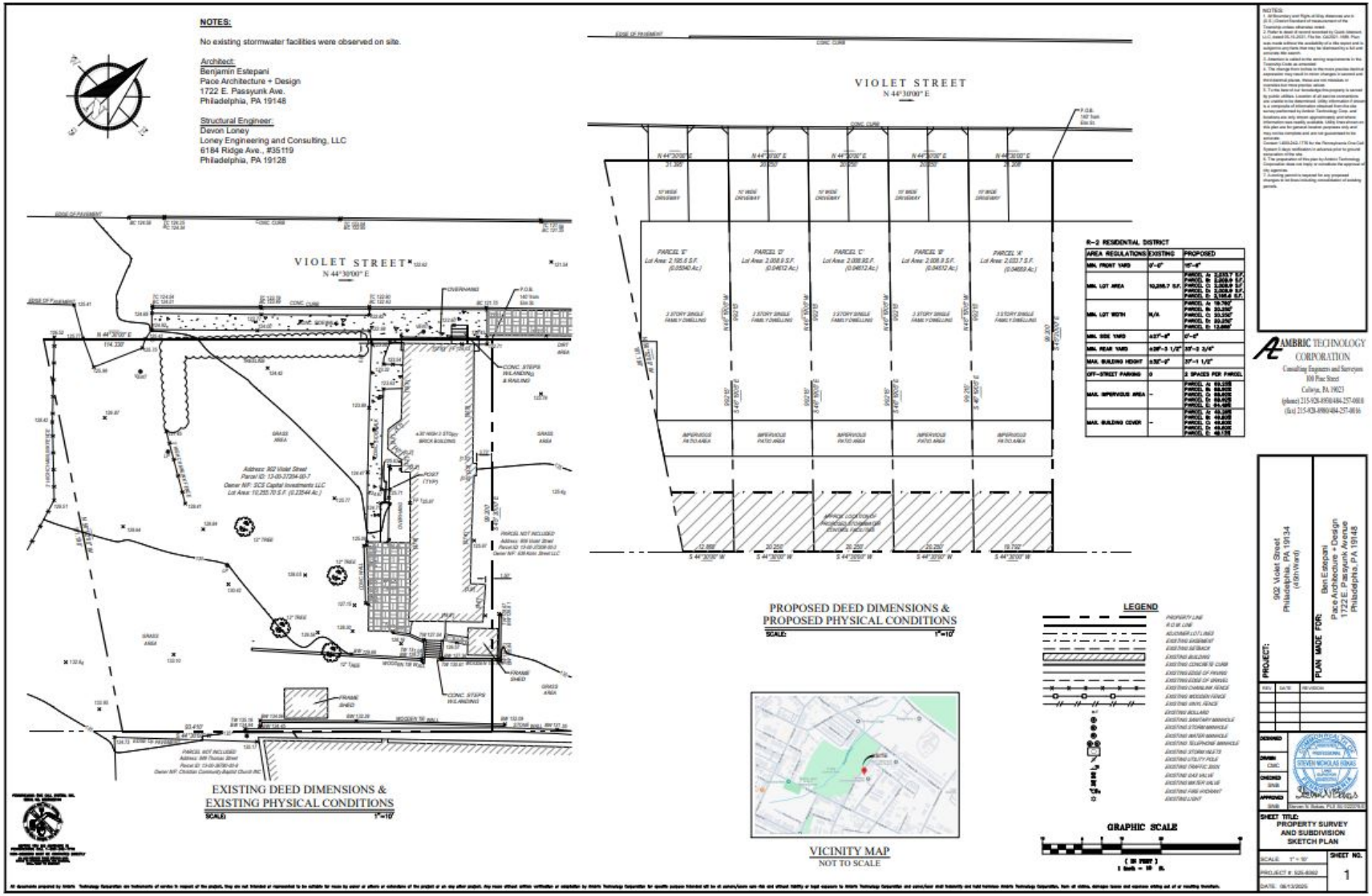
Montgomery County Planning Commission

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Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
PO Box 311 Norristown PA 19404-0311
(p) 610 278-3722 (f) 610 278-3941
www.montcopa.org/planning

Aerial photography provided by Nearmap


NOTES:
No existing stormwater facilities were observed on site.
Architect:
Benjamin Estepani
Pace Architecture + Design
1722 E. Passyunk Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19148
Structural Engineer:
Devon Loney
Loney Engineering and Consulting, LLC
6184 Ridge Ave., #35119
Philadelphia, PA 19128
VIOLET STREET
N 44°30'00" E
EXISTING DEED DIMENSIONS &
EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS
SCALE: 1"=10'
PROPOSED DEED DIMENSIONS &
PROPOSED PHYSICAL CONDITIONS
SCALE: 1"=10'
R-2 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
AREA REGULATIONS | EXISTING | PROPOSED
MIN. FRONT YARD | 0'-0" | 10'-4"
MIN. LOT AREA | 10,288.7 S.F. | PARCEL A: 2,533.7 S.F. PARCEL B: 2,559.4 S.F. PARCEL C: 2,559.4 S.F. PARCEL D: 2,559.4 S.F. PARCEL E: 2,196.4 S.F.
MIN. LOT WIDTH | N/A | PARCEL A: 19.750' PARCEL B: 20.250' PARCEL C: 20.250' PARCEL D: 20.250' PARCEL E: 13.000'
MIN. SIDE YARD | ±27'-4" | 0'-0"
MIN. REAR YARD | ±29'-3 1/2" | 25'-3 3/4"
MAX. BUILDING HEIGHT | ±32'-0" | 37'-1 1/2"
OFF-STREET PARKING | 0 | 2 SPACES PER PARCEL
MAX. IMPERVIOUS AREA | – | PARCEL A: 69.23% PARCEL B: 68.83% PARCEL C: 68.83% PARCEL D: 68.83% PARCEL E: 74.49%
MAX. BUILDING COVER | – | PARCEL A: 45.28% PARCEL B: 44.83% PARCEL C: 44.83% PARCEL D: 44.83% PARCEL E: 48.13%
LEGEND
GRAPHIC SCALE
VICINITY MAP
NOT TO SCALE
AMBRIC TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION
Consulting Engineers and Surveyors
100 Pine Street
Colwyn, PA 19023
(phone) 215-928-8900/484-257-0810
(fax) 215-928-8900/484-257-0816
PROJECT: 902 Violet Street Philadelphia, PA 19134 (45th Ward)
PLAN MADE FOR: Ben Estepani Pace Architecture + Design 1722 E. Passyunk Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19148
SHEET TITLE: PROPERTY SURVEY AND SUBDIVISION SKETCH PLAN
SHEET NO. 1