

February 1, 2019

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Andrea Campisi, Senior Planner, Department of Building & Planning

SUBJECT: AMENDMENT PLAN & CONDITIONAL USE PLAN, 111 W. Lancaster Avenue, McDonald's, Ardmore, AM# 3436AA & CU# 3436C, Ward 4.

Proposal

The applicant, Jonathan Baske, seeks to amend the previously approved Preliminary Plan as follows:

- Remove an existing arbor along Lancaster Avenue with the brick support posts to remain with pedestrian scaled lighting added to them;
- Replacement of the brick pavers and brick crosswalk across the by-pass lane with a larger concrete paver area and stamped concrete pavers;
- Minor regrading in the surface parking lot around two ADA parking spaces; and
- Renovation of the entire façade of the building.

The applicant seeks to amend the following conditions that were imposed on the original approval:

2. The entire exterior of the building shall consist of natural red brick with a limited amount of off-white stucco. Trim may be white and the roof may be red, provided any trim around and on top of the roof is white. All windows shall contain off-white muntins.
3. The commercial operation shall only be open for retail sales between 6 a.m. and 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. Friday through Saturday.

The applicant also seeks Conditional Use approval to use architectural designs which differ from those in the Mixed Use Special Transportation District (MUST) as follows:

- Zoning Code §155-87.25.C.2.d - To provide 24% clear windows and doors on the ground floor of the primary front façade where 50% is required. This façade currently contains 27% clear windows and doors.
- Zoning Code §155-87.25.C.2.f.2 - To provide window head height of 8'7", where 9 to 12 feet above the sidewalk is required.

The applicant also seeks approval from the Board of Commissioners to use stucco on more than 50% of the façade.

- Zoning Code §155-87.25.C.2.j states: Stucco or artificial materials, except fire clay products such as brick, shall not occupy more than 50% of the building facade unless the Board of Commissioners makes a specific finding that more than 50% is appropriate, and similar to the architectural features on other similar buildings in the district.

The Conditional Use Hearing before the Township Hearing Officer has been scheduled for **February 12, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.** in the Caucus Room of the Township Administration Building.

The proposal is illustrated on the attached set of plans that includes fifteen (15) sheets prepared by Core States, Inc., dated September 7, 2018, last revised January 19, 2019. Architectural elevations are included in the plan set.

Changes to the Plan from December:

- Overall amount of glazing increased;
- Second front entrance door retained;
- Articulated feature added to bring prominence to front entrance on primary front façade;
- Overall amount of stucco decreased;
- Pedestrian scaled lighting added in place of the existing arbor;
- Benches and trash cans required from previous approval added to site plan; and
- One bike rack provided

Property Description

The property contains approximately .8 acres and is improved with a McDonald's restaurant, associated drive-through lane, and 30 parking spaces. The property is within the ASDD1/MUST Zoning Districts. On the draft Zoning Update Map the property is proposed to be included in the TC1 Zoning District.

The property is located across from the intersection of Lancaster and Ardmore Avenues within the Ardmore Commercial District. The site is located adjacent to a private Township-owned driveway that leads to Public Parking Lot 16 and to the Ardmore West Shopping Center, a strip-style development. A 25-foot-wide access easement along the rear portion of the property provides access from the site to adjoining properties, including Ardmore West Shopping Center and the Township parking lot.

Property History

McDonald's has operated in the current building for approximately 17 years. The site and existing building were redeveloped by McDonald's prior to the enactment of the MUST District. The proposal is part of a nationwide remodeling program being undertaken by McDonald's to renovate all existing restaurants to create a more contemporary look. A similar renovation was completed at the Rosemont McDonald's (1257 W. Lancaster Avenue) which required Conditional Use to deviate from the Bryn Mawr Village Design Standards.

Montgomery County Planning Commission Review

The County is not required to review amendment plans and/or conditional use applications.

ISSUES

1. Conditional Use Requests

The applicant seeks the following Conditional Uses:

- Zoning Code Section §155-87.25.C.2.f.2 to provide a window head height of 8'7", where 9 to 12 feet above sidewalk level is required.

Given the de minimus nature of the deviation and the fact that the windows are existing, the building is being renovated, and is not new construction, staff does not have an issue with this request.

- Zoning Code Section §155-87.25.C.2.d to provide 24% clear windows and doors on the ground floor of the primary front façade where 50% is required. Currently the primary front façade contains 27% clear windows and doors and the proposed elevations contain 24%.

Staff is not opposed to the reduction in glazing as it is directly related to the increased height of the parapet and not an actual reduction in the existing glazing.

Element	Required	Existing	Proposed
Stucco	50% maximum permitted	38.1%	69.6%
Clear Windows/Doors	50%	27.2%	24%
Window Head Height	9-12' above sidewalk	8.7"	8.7"

While staff appreciates the applicant retaining the existing glass entry door on the front elevation we believe a traditional commercial entry such as the one shown below (at left) would be even more appropriate for the site given its location in the Ardmore Commercial District.



Regarding the amount of stucco on the building, the revised elevations (above right) contain 69.6% stucco where the building currently contains 38.1% stucco. As noted above, the Board of Commissioners can authorize more than 50% stucco if they make a specific finding that more than 50% is appropriate, and similar to the architectural features on other similar buildings in the district. In order to further articulate the increased amount of stucco, staff recommends the applicant provide two inset panels of a lighter color above the metal canopy shown below.

It is the applicant’s burden to demonstrate compliance with the legislative intent below.

§ 155-87.25, Development design standards:

(1) The purpose of this section is to require pedestrian-oriented buildings and to require building entrances to be oriented toward the streets, sidewalks and/or public accessways. Windows must facilitate views into and out of buildings. Requirements for orientation and primary entrances are intended to:

- (a) Provide for convenient, direct and accessible pedestrian access to and from public sidewalks, transit facilities, and residential and commercial uses;*
 - (b) Provide a safe, pleasant and enjoyable pedestrian experience by connecting activities between buildings in the MUST District and within a structure to the adjacent sidewalk and/or transit stop; and*
 - (c) Promote use of pedestrian and mass transit modes of transportation to access residential and commercial facilities.*
- (2) New and renovated buildings may be either traditional in their architectural character or be a contemporary expression of traditional styles and forms, respecting the scale, proportion, character and materials of structures within a five-hundred-foot radius.*
- (3) The preservation and rehabilitation of existing buildings and structures is strongly encouraged in order to create diversity of development, accent pedestrian-scale activity, and to preserve the character of Lower Merion's existing commercial districts in the vicinity of the train stations.*

C. Architectural design standards.

(1) The architectural design standards have been incorporated into this district to ensure that the size and proportions of new buildings relate to the scale of the existing structures, especially at the street level. The first three stories of new buildings must relate to the street level heights of existing buildings. The architectural features of the

vertical and horizontal facade character of new buildings must relate to adjacent structures (especially at the street level). The setback of the new buildings must relate to the setback established by the surrounding existing buildings.

2. Streetscape & Landscaping

While staff appreciates the connection from the street provided by the arbor, given its deteriorated state the addition of pedestrian scaled lighting is an acceptable alternative as it will help frame the building entrance and emphasize the existing path from the sidewalk to the front door. The applicant has also updated the site plan to replace the required benches and trash cans required by the previous approval and to add the bike rack required by MUST.



The applicant also agreed to replace any plant material that was required with the original application, but which no longer exists on the site. Given that a large majority of the original plant material is missing and much of the remaining material, particularly the shrubs, is beyond its useful life, this is a great opportunity to completely renovate the remaining landscaping to provide greater wildlife and aesthetic value. Existing mature and healthy large trees should be retained but much of the understory shrub layer should be replaced. A condition has been included requiring the applicant to work with staff and the EAC to select appropriate species to accomplish this goal.

3. Hours of Operation

As noted above, the applicant seeks to amend the following condition of approval to allow the drive-through to operate 24 hours on the weekends:

- The commercial operation shall only be open for retail sales between 6 a.m. and 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 6 a.m. and 12 a.m. Friday through Saturday.

While the restaurant portion of the commercial operation complies with the condition, the drive-through is currently open 24 hours on the weekends.

ACTION:

The Planning Commission must make the following recommendations on this application:

1. A recommendation to the Hearing Officer on the Conditional Use requests.
 - **To reduce the amount of glazing on the primary front façade from 27% to 24%** as required in Zoning Code Section §155-87.25.C.2.d.
 - **To provide a window head height of 8'7", where 9 to 12 feet above sidewalk level is required** in Zoning Code Section §155-87.25.C.2.f.2.
2. A recommendation to the Building and Planning Committee on the following:
 - To use stucco on more than 50% of the façade.
 - To operate the drive-through 24-hours on the weekend
 - To amend the following condition: "The entire exterior of the building shall consist of natural red brick with a limited amount of off-white stucco. Trim may be white, and the roof may be red, provided any trim around and on top of the roof is white. All windows shall contain off-white muntins."
3. A recommendation to the Building & Planning Committee on the Amendment Plan.
 - Staff's recommended conditions of approval on the Amendment Plan are attached.