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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE • PO Box 311
NORRISTOWN, PA 19404-0311
610-278-3722
FAX: 610-278-3941 • TDD: 610-631-1211
WWW.MONTCOPA.ORG

JODY L. HOLTON, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 6, 2019

Mr. Christopher Leswing, Director of Building & Planning
Building & Planning Department
Township of Lower Merion
75 East Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, PA 19003

Re: MCPC #13-0160-004
Plan Name: Bryn Mawr College – Student Life Center
(20,500 sq. ft. institutional on approximately 16.0 acres)
Situate: Merion Avenue (S); New Gulph Road (W)
Township of Lower Merion

Dear Mr. Leswing:

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 January 10, 2019. We forward this letter as a report of our review and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing health center, Pagoda building, and Cartref building on the Bryn Mawr College campus and construct a new two-story wellness center with a total building area of approximately 20,500 square feet. Additional improvements shown at this time include: a new vehicular driveway off of New Gulph Road near the proposed wellness center, a parking lot with 16 parking spaces off of North Roberts Road, underground stormwater management facilities, and rearrangement of the pedestrian walkways. The property is located in the Township's R2 Residence zoning district. This proposal was previously reviewed in a review letter dated September 6, 2018.

RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission generally supports the proposed construction of a new wellness center for the Bryn Mawr College. However, in the course of our review we identified the



following issues that we feel should be addressed prior to moving forward with the land development. Our review comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing health center and construct a new wellness center further back from New Gulph Road in the vicinity of the existing health center. However, the applicant also proposes to demolish the Cartref and Pagoda buildings near the intersection of Merion Avenue and New Gulph Road. These buildings are both listed as “Additional Buildings in District” on the original National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the Bryn Mawr College Historic District. According to this document, the Cartref building was built in 1885 as the residence of the first president of the college, James E. Rhoads, and the Pagoda building was built in 1913 and was originally used as a classroom for an open air model school.

The demolition of these buildings does not appear to be necessary for the construction of the proposed wellness center. We wish to reiterate that we strongly encourage the applicant to work with the Township to explore the opportunity to preserve the historic Cartref and Pagoda buildings and evaluate the applicability of incentives provided for in Article XXVIA of the Township’s Zoning Ordinance and Historic Resource Overlay District.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The applicant proposes to expand the vehicular driveway off of North Roberts Road in the vicinity of the Pensby Center and construct a 16-space parking area. We wish to reiterate that the expansion of the vehicular driveway off of North Roberts Road appears to necessitate the relocation of an existing crosswalk across North Roberts Road connecting to the Brecon Hall. Future versions of the plans should show how this important pedestrian linkage will be maintained.

LANDSCAPING DESIGN

We encourage the applicant to consider incorporating additional landscaping, including shade trees, into the existing large parking area located between the proposed student life and wellness center and Erdman Hall. For example, additional shade trees and/or attractive ground cover vegetation could be incorporated into the large existing median in the center of the parking lot.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant’s proposal to construct a new wellness center for the Bryn Mawr College; however we strongly encourage the applicant to explore ways to preserve some of the existing historic structures as part of the proposed 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marley B Bice". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marley Bice, AICP, Principal Planner
610-278-3740 – mbice@montcopa.org

c: Bryn Mawr College, Applicant
George Broseman, Applicant's Representative
Site Engineering Concepts, LLC, Applicant's Engineer
Gilbert P. High, Jr., Esq., Twp. Solicitor
Ernie B. McNeely, Twp. Manager
Edward P. Pluciennik, P.E., Twp. Engineer

Attachment A: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Site Plan – Wellness Center
Attachment B: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Site Plan – Roberts Road Parking
Attachment C: Aerial Image of Site