

September 6, 2019

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Jillian Dierks, Planner, Building and Planning Department

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY LOT LINE CHANGE & CONDITIONAL USE PLAN – 321 Caversham Road & 719 New Gulph Road, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, LLC# 3840 & 3840C

Proposal

The applicant, George Broseman, on behalf of Bryn Mawr College, is seeking Preliminary Lot Line Change Plan approval for the following:

- To transfer 51,288 sq. ft. (1.2 acres) from 321 Caversham Road (Lot 1) to 719 New Gulph Road (Lot 2).

In conjunction with the proposed lot line change, the applicant also seeks Conditional Use approval to create a rear lot at 321 Caversham Road under [Zoning Code Section 155-128](#).

The proposal is illustrated on the attached plan prepared by Site Engineering Concepts, LLC, dated July 16, 2019, last revised August 22, 2019.

Property Description & History

- 719 New Gulph Road:** This 7-acre property is improved with Arnecliffe, an institutionally used building with a 6,927 sq. ft. footprint, gravel areas, and access driveways leading to Morris Avenue and New Gulph Road.

The property is a [Class II historic resource](#). Bryn Mawr College purchased Arnecliffe, in 1962 and it now contains the Bryn Mawr Art Studio and is used for faculty housing. The property also previously contained “Perry House”, which was demolished in 2016 and is now home to the Perry Garden. The property is zoned R2.

- 321 Caversham Road:** The 2.8-acre property is improved with a single-family dwelling with a 3,525 sq. ft. footprint and a driveway extending from Caversham Road, a private road that terminates in a cul de sac. The property currently has frontage on both Caversham Road and Morris Avenue. Prior to 1975 the property was owned by Bryn Mawr College, was then transferred to a private individual and then transferred back to Bryn Mawr College in 2018. The property is zoned R2.



Arnecliffe- 719 Old Gulph Road



Perry Garden- 719 Old Gulph Road



321 Caversham Road

Background

On June 15, 2018 the owner of 321 Caversham Road donated the property to Bryn Mawr College. The College stated that they do not have a use for the house and opted to sell it for use as a single family dwelling while retaining some of the land which will be consolidated into the adjoining campus.

Lot Line Change Plans

While the proposal is relatively minor, the Subdivision & Land Development Code requires an applicant to obtain subdivision approval for all lot line changes. The Subdivision and Land Development Code defines a subdivision as follows:

SUBDIVISION

The division or redivision of a lot, tract or parcel of land by any means into two or more lots, tracts, parcels or other divisions of land, including changes in existing lot lines for the purpose, whether immediate or future, of lease, partition by the court for distribution to heirs or devisees, transfer of ownership or building or lot development; provided, however, that the subdivision by lease of land for agricultural purposes into parcels of more than 10 acres, not involving any new street or easement of access or residential dwelling, shall be exempted. "Subdivision" shall include the merger of two or more lots into a lesser number of lots and the mortgage of less than all of a lot.

Montgomery County Planning Commission Review

The County review letter is attached. The County supports the proposal. The County recommendations have been addressed on the attached plan or have been incorporated into the conditions of approval.

Zoning

The following table details the bulk, area and setback requirements for the existing and proposed conditions.

R2 Zoning District		321 Caversham Road		719 New Gulph Road	
		Existing Lot 1	Proposed Lot 1	Existing Lot 2	Proposed Lot 2
Minimum Net Lot Area (sq. ft.)	18,000 (Lot 1) & 23,400 (Lot 2)*	110,253 (2.5 acres)	58,965 (1.4 acres)**	283,075 (6.5 acres)	334,363 (7.7 acres)
Minimum Lot Width	95'	118' + 20'	20'	449'	
Maximum Building Area	18%	3.1%	5.5%	2.4%	2.1%
Minimum Front Yard	40'	>40'	>40'	>40'	>40'
Minimum Side Yard & Aggregate Side yard	12' & 35'	>12' & 35'	>12' & 35'	>12' & 35'	>12' & 35'
Minimum Rear Yard	25'	>25'	>25'	>25'	>25'
Maximum Impervious Surface	24% (Lot 1) 20% (Lot 2)*	8.8%	16%	15.3%	13%

* The plan shows that 719 New Gulph contains an average slope of 13.2%. Zoning Code Section [155-166](#) requires an increased lot area and caps the impervious surface at 20%.

**For the purposes of calculating the impervious surface for a rear lot, the area between the street line and a line drawn radial thereto at the point where the lot attains the minimum lot width required in its zoning district (often referred to as 'the leg') the lot area is 63,800.

Issues

1. Rezoning

A public hearing has been scheduled for September 18, 2019 to rezone both 719 Old Gulph Road and 321 Caversham Road from R2-Residential District to IE–Institutional Education District. If the Lot Line Change Plan is approved, the reconfigured property at 321 Caversham Road, which contains a residential use, would be zoned IE-Institutional Education. In their application, the applicant requested that 321 Caversham Road be re-zoned to LDR3. Since the lot line change had not been approved at the time the Draft Zoning Code was advertised, this was not possible without split zoning a portion of 321 Caversham Road. Staff has included a condition that requires the applicant to submit a rezoning petition should the Lot Line Change Plan be approved to rezone 321 Caversham Road to LDR3.

2. Conditional Use

The applicant seeks conditional use approval to create a rear lot at 321 Caversham Road. The property currently has frontage/lot width on both Caversham Road and Morris Avenue. The lot line change would eliminate the frontage on Morris Avenue and the property would be left with only 20 feet of frontage on Caversham Road where the required lot width is 95 feet at the street line in the R2 zoning district. [Zoning Code Section 155-128](#), Rear lot development, allows a property owner to seek conditional use to provide less than the required lot width. This section states:

In any residential subdivision made under the provisions of Chapter [135](#) of the Code of the Township of Lower Merion or with respect to any presently existing residentially zoned lot, the Board of Commissioners may authorize the creation of narrow lots as a conditional use subject to the following regulations:

[A.](#) The minimum lot width of the lot at the building line shall be the minimum lot width required at the street line for lots in the zoning district in which the lot is located. Minimum lot width shall be measured parallel to the street at the point of the proposed building closest to the street and shall extend the full depth of the building, plus an additional 25 feet.

The property at 321 Caversham Road complies with this requirement.

[B.](#) An applicant shall not be permitted to increase the number of conforming lots permitted in a subdivision through the use of narrow lots.

No new lots are being created under this proposal.

[C.](#) Every narrow lot shall include at least 20 continuous feet along the street line, and such connection to the street shall extend at no less than that width to the point at which the narrow lot reaches the lot width required by the zoning district in which the lot is located. The area between the street line and the point at which the narrow line reaches the required lot width shall be capable of providing driveway and utility access to the lot (i.e., shall not be blocked by natural barriers, such as lakes, or slopes in excess of 25%) and shall not be excessively irregular in shape.

The narrow/rear lot contains 20.1 feet at the street line and the driveway is within this area. The sanitary sewer line serving the dwelling is not located in this area but instead will be located on the portion of the lot to be transferred to Bryn Mawr College. Other utilities serving 321 Caversham Road are not shown on the plan. The applicant shall present this information at the Planning Commission meeting and at the public hearing and shall indicate whether the 20 foot leg is capable of providing utility access to the lot.

D. In calculating the lot area of a rear lot, the area between the street line and a line drawn radial thereto at the point where the lot attains the minimum lot width required in its zoning district shall not be included in applying the requirements of this chapter, except those requirements relating to impervious surfaces.

The lot area noted on the plan does not include the 20 foot leg for the purposes of calculating the minimum lot area as shown in the Zoning Summary on Sheet 2 of the plan set.

E. The Board of Commissioners shall designate which of the required yards shall be the front yard for rear lots.

The plan shows the front yard setback along Caversham Road.

F. The Board of Commissioners shall find that the creation of a narrow lot or narrow lots shall be in accordance with the land use goals and requirements contained in this chapter and in Chapter [135](#) of the Code of the Township of Lower Merion.

The creation of this narrow lot will enable the house to remain as a residential use. The land being transferred to Bryn Mawr College includes a wooded area that will continue to act as a transition area between the existing residential and institutional uses.

G. Any rear lot approved by conditional use shall connect to the adjacent sanitary sewer, when and if it is installed, even though the building may be more than 200 feet away.

The sanitary lateral serving Lot 1 (321 Caversham Road) traverses the rear of the property and ties into the sanitary sewer main in Morris Avenue. The plan shows a proposed 20 foot sanitary sewer easement through the land to be transferred to Lot 2. The Township Engineer noted that this configuration is not consistent with the rules and regulations for Township sewer connections and requires relief from [Sewers Code Section 126-6.1](#), to allow the house to be served by a sanitary lateral located in an easement that crosses Lot 2. This section of the Code requires that all connections to the existing sanitary sewer system be made within the confines of the lot served by the lateral. The Township Engineer support this relief as only one lot is being served and it prevents the need for further disturbance to the property for the installation of a new sewer lateral.

The Conditional Use Hearing has been scheduled for [September 17, 2019 at 4:30](#) p.m. in the Caucus Room of the Township Administration Building.

3. Landscaped Buffer

In his review the Township Engineer stated that a buffer shall be provided between the institutional property and the adjacent residential properties. Staff notes that the area located along the northeastern property boundary is already wooded. Staff has included a condition requiring a buffer to be installed at such future time when Bryn Mawr College proposes an expansion of the institutional use on the property. Staff has also

included a condition requiring the applicant to devine existing trees in an effort to ensure the health of the existing natural features and future buffer.

4. Pedestrian Connectivity & Sidewalk Requirement

Sidewalks are not currently provided along the New Gulph Road or Morris Avenue frontages but are required by Subdivision and Land Development Code Section 135-28, as both of these roads are heavily traveled. Staff recommends partial relief from this code section to defer the installation of the sidewalks until such time as required by the Board of Commissioners or when the institutional use on the property is further expanded.

The Planning Commission may recall that as part of the 2018 approval of the proposed Wellness Center (LD# 3813) at Bryn Mawr College the applicant was required to install three ADA ramps at the intersection of New Gulph Road, Morris Avenue and Pembroke Road. Staff recommends that the applicant provide an update on the status of these improvements at the Planning Commission meeting.

5. Relief

The application requires relief from the following Code sections:

- Subdivision & Land Development Code Section 135-28, to not construct sidewalks along either property frontage.
 - As stated above, staff recommends that this requirement be deferred until such time as required by the Board of Commissioners or if the institutional use on 719 New Gulph Road is further expanded.
- Subdivision & Land Development Code Section 135-35, to create a lot (Lot 2) which is excessively irregular in shape.
 - Staff supports the necessary relief and notes that both lots are currently irregular in shape.
- Sewers Code Section 126-6.1, to allow the sanitary lateral serving Lot 1 to cross over Lot 2 via an easement.
 - As stated above, staff supports the necessary relief.

6. Action

The Planning Commission must take the following actions for this application:

1. Provide a recommendation on the Conditional Use application.
2. Provide a recommendation on the Preliminary Lot Change Plan.
3. Provide a recommendation on the following relief:
 - a. Subdivision & Land Development Code Section 135-28, to not construct sidewalks along the property frontage until such time as required by the Board of Commissioners.
 - b. Subdivision & Land Development Code Section 135-35, to create a lot (Lot 2) which is excessively irregular in shape.
 - c. Sewers Code Section 126-6.1, to allow the sanitary lateral serving Lot 1 to cross over Lot 2 via an easement.