

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Building & Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: 1800 W. Montgomery Avenue & 1835 County Line Road, Villanova, Lower Merion School District Athletic Fields

Prepared by: Andrea Campisi, Senior Planner, Building and Planning Department

Date: November 12, 2019

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Approve a Tentative Sketch Plan.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

All Tentative Sketch Plans are subject to the approval of the Board of Commissioners.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

All land development plans are reviewed on an individual basis.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

This application was on the September 11, 2019 Building and Planning Committee agenda and was recommended for denial for the following reasons:

1. The Plan did not show a sidewalk along County Line Road and therefore did not comply with Subdivision and Land Development Code Section 135-28.A
2. The applicant did not submit the Historic Resource Impact Study in time to obtain Historical Commission review comments as part of the Tentative Sketch Plan review which did not comply with Subdivision and Land Development Code Section 135-7.C.
3. The proposal disturbed steep slopes greater than 25% and did not minimize disturbance to slopes greater than 15% and did not comply with Natural Features Code Section 101-5.C.1 and 101-5.C.2.

The application was placed on the September 18, 2019 Board of Commissioners agenda at which time the Commissioners referred the application back to the Building and Planning Committee for further consideration.

On September 23, 2019, the applicant appeared before the Historical Commission at which time they reviewed the revised site plan, dated August 23, 2019, and the Historic Resource Impact Study and made the following recommendation:

The Historical Commission recommended approval of the current revised plan, dated 8.23.19, presented to the Commission at the meeting, which retains the courtyard walls to the north in their totality but loses some context of the site walls to the south, recognizing that parking has been re-configured to retain those northern walls and to provide some relief in the near context around Oakwell. Further, the Commission finds importance, as outlined in the Historic Resource Impact Study, of the near context, including landscape and walls as a priority to retaining the integrity of the Oakwell property and building. Further, the Commission will always encourage applicants to go further in terms of preserving close context, including landscape features and plantings adjacent to the Oakwell mansion. The Commission sees the Tea House as a resource on the subject property that is contributing and should be retained when considering arrangements of the fields. The Commission recognizes that the landscape features and structures on the adjacent property, while not in the purview of the Historical Commission, should be maintained as much as possible.

On October 30, 2019, the applicant submitted revised plans showing the required five foot sidewalk along County Line Road. A portion of this sidewalk is located within the identified wetlands on the site.

No changes were made to the plan with respect to the disturbances to steep slopes and the applicant continues to seek relief from the above referenced sections of the Natural Features Code. Several other amendments were made to the plan as outlined in the attached letter from the School District's attorney.

V. Impact on Township Finances:

There is no impact on Township finances.

VI. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board of Commissioners approve the revised Tentative Sketch Plan subject to the revisions to the conditions noted below.

- a. The plan was revised to provide a turnaround area on the site for passenger vehicles. Therefore condition 4 can be deleted.

~~4. The applicant shall provide a turnaround area on the site for passenger vehicles.~~

- b. The plan was revised to eliminate dead-end parking aisles in the two surface parking lots. Therefore condition 6 can be deleted.

~~6. The applicant shall investigate eliminating the dead end parking aisles in the two surface parking areas.~~

- c. The plan was revised to provide five foot wide sidewalk along the full frontage of the site along County Line Road. Therefore condition 7 can be deleted.

~~7. The applicant shall install a five foot wide sidewalk along the full frontage of the property along County Line Road.~~

- d. The plan was revised to provide a sidewalk along the frontage of the site along Stone Ridge Lane therefore condition 8 can be deleted.

~~8. The applicant shall work with staff to provide pedestrian access into the site from Stone Ridge Lane)~~

- e. The plan was revised to provide a sidewalk along a portion of the driveway to County Line Road. Staff recommends the applicant investigate extending the proposed sidewalk to the three proposed parking spaces located in front of the existing dwelling that is to remain. Therefore condition 10 can be revised as follows:

10. A sidewalk shall be installed along the full length of the driveway to County Line Road to facilitate pedestrian access into the site. **The proposed sidewalk shall extend to the three proposed parking spaces located in front of the existing dwelling that is to remain.**

- f. The plan was revised to provide a sidewalk along Stone Ridge Lane on the frontage of the site. Therefore condition 11 can be deleted.

~~11. The applicant shall investigate installing a sidewalk or path along Stone Ridge Lane on the frontage of the property.~~

- g. The plan was revised to show the required buffer per Zoning Code Section 155-11.E.8. However, the buffer is not shown in its entirety around the perimeter of the property. Therefore condition 19 should be revised as follows.

19. The required buffer per Zoning Code Section 155-11.E.8 shall be shown on the Preliminary Plan **around the entire perimeter of the property, with the exception of along any road frontage.** The buffer shall be designed as a naturalized ecosystem along the edges of the property.

- h. The plan was revised to provide centerline pavement markings where the width of the drive transitions from 24 feet to 36 feet wide. Therefore condition 25 can be deleted.

~~25. Centerline pavement markings shall be provided where the width of the driveway transitions from 24 feet wide to 36 feet wide.~~

- i. The plan was revised to remove the word “East” from the address of 1835 County Line Road. Therefore condition 45 can be deleted

~~45. The word “East” shall be removed from the address of 1835 County Line Road.~~

- j. Since the applicant appeared before the Historical Commission on September 23, 2019, the following relief is no longer needed and can be deleted.

~~A. Subdivision and Land Development Code Section 135-7.C.1, to not obtain Historical Commission review comments as part of the Tentative Sketch Plan review.~~

- k. Since the applicant provided a sidewalk along County Line Road, the following relief is no longer needed and can be deleted.

~~D. Subdivision & Land Development Code Section 135-28.A, to not provide a sidewalk along County Line Road.~~

- l. The plan was revised to provide a sidewalk along County Line Road. Therefore the following language should be added to condition 40.

The sidewalks across County Line Road shall be shown to cross the driveway at grade adjacent to the concrete apron. Detectable warning surfaces shall be shown on the sidewalks in advance of the crossing of the drive by the sidewalk.