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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

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JODY L. HOLTON, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

December 27, 2019

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

Re: MCPC #18-0258-002
Plan Name: Holy Child School at Rosemont
(1 lot/15,210 sq. ft. institutional on approximately 11 acres)
Situates: West Montgomery Avenue (S); Wendover Avenue (E)
Township of Lower Merion

Dear Mr. Leswing:

We have reviewed the above-referenced subdivision and land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on November 22, 2019. We forward this letter as a report of our review and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Holy Child School at Rosemont, proposes to consolidate the existing campus parcel at 1344 Montgomery Avenue with eight adjacent parcels to create an approximately 11 acre tract. All of the existing improvements on those parcels not currently used as part of the school are proposed to be removed, except for the residence at 1301 Wendover Avenue and the pool at 1315 Wendover Avenue. Two of the single-family homes proposed to be demolished at 1309 Wendover Avenue and 1320 West Montgomery Avenue are listed on the township's Historic Resource Inventory as Class II historic resources.

The applicant proposes to construct a total of 15,210 square feet of new building coverage including: a 1,373 square foot addition to the cafeteria, a 11,359 square foot addition to the multi-purpose building, and a 2,478 square foot carriage house. Additional improvements shown at this time include a 77,400 square foot multipurpose artificial turf field with a scoreboard, 44 new parking spaces, a hardscape play area to also serve as 26 auxiliary parking spaces, underground stormwater management facilities, new and reconfigured pedestrian pathways and plazas, and landscaping.



The property is located in the township's R2 Residence zoning district. A tentative sketch plan for this proposal was reviewed previously in a review letter dated November 21, 2018.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The Land Use Element of the 2016 Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan identifies the current Holy Child School at Rosemont property as Institutional and the residential properties the applicant proposes to consolidate with their property as Low & Medium Density Residential.

This area of Lower Merion Township is identified as a Suburban Residential Area in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco2040: A Shared Vision*. Suburban Residential Areas are primarily residential areas that can include institutional uses.

RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) generally supports the applicant's proposal. However, in the course of our review we identified the following issues that we feel should be addressed prior to moving forward with the subdivision and land development. Our review comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

We commend the applicant for proposing to construct a five-foot wide sidewalk along a portion of their Wendover Avenue frontage to improve pedestrian access to and from the site. The proposed site plan also shows a four-foot wide mulch trail along the southern border of the property that appears to provide an alternate pedestrian connection between Montgomery Avenue and Wendover Avenue. It is unclear from the information provided whether the applicant intends to use the mulch path for pedestrian circulation internal to the site or whether the applicant intends to allow the general public to utilize this connection between Montgomery Avenue and Wendover Avenue. Based on the information provided on Sheet 6 of 20, it appears that the proposed mulch trail will be located several feet below the grade of the adjacent athletic fields, which could cause safety concerns if the pedestrian activity along the mulch trail cannot be easily monitored.

If the applicant intends to allow the general community to use the mulch trail as an alternate connection between Montgomery Avenue and Wendover Avenue, trail paving material should extend fully between the end of the mulch trail and the edge of the sidewalk and an opening in the continuous aluminum fence along Montgomery Avenue (as shown on Sheet LP-2) should be provided. In addition, the applicant may wish to consider whether the grade difference between the mulch trail and the athletic fields could be reduced to improve visibility and monitoring of the trail area, or if alternate methods of surveillance may be needed.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The applicant proposes the construction of several large underground stormwater management systems under the new multi-purpose artificial turf field and southern parking area. It appears that the applicant is proposing underground infiltration beds, therefore special consideration should be given to avoiding compaction of those areas of the site during construction.

In addition, we encourage the applicant to explore opportunities to incorporate additional above-ground, vegetated stormwater best management practices, if site conditions allow. Above-ground stormwater management facilities, such as rain gardens, could create valuable educational opportunities for students and the general public.

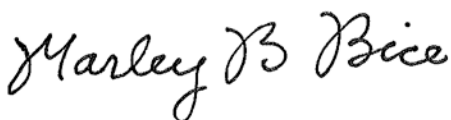
CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal to expand an existing institution; however we feel that our suggested revisions will better achieve the township's planning objectives for institutional 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. Please print the assigned MCPC number (MCPC #18-0258-002) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



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

- c: Holy Child School at Rosemont, Applicant
- George Broseman, Applicant's Representative
- Site Engineering Concept, 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 Proposed Site Plan
- Attachment B: Aerial Image of Site