

January 10, 2020

**TO:** Planning Commission Members

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

**SUBJECT:** PRELIMINARY LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN – 1320, 1326 & 1344 W. Montgomery Avenue and 1291, 1295, 1301, 1309, 1315, 1319 Wendover Avenue, Bryn Mawr, Holy Child School at Rosemont, LD# 3818, Ward 6.

### **Proposal**

The applicant, George Broseman, Esquire, is seeking Preliminary Plan approval on behalf of the Holy Child School at Rosemont, for the following:

- Demolition of five residential structures located at 1319 Wendover Avenue, 1315 Wendover Avenue, 1309 Wendover Avenue, 1320 W. Montgomery Avenue and 1326 W. Montgomery Avenue;
- Preservation of the residence at 1301 Wendover Avenue to be converted for school use;
- Consolidation of eight properties into the existing school property including 1291 Wendover Avenue and 1295 Wendover Avenue, which are currently vacant lots;
- Construction of a carriage house with a 2,478 sq. ft. footprint;
- Construction of an 11,359 sq. ft. addition to the existing gymnasium/multi-purpose building;
- Construction of a cafeteria addition with a 1,373 sq. ft. footprint on the existing school building;
- Creation of a 44-space surface parking lot along Wendover Avenue;
- Construction of an outdoor play area/auxiliary parking area with 26 spaces;
- Construction of outdoor plazas and patio areas;
- Construction of a multi-purpose artificial turf field with a scoreboard and bleachers;
- Installation of three stormwater management systems beneath the artificial turf field and new parking area; and
- Construction of various pedestrian walkways within the site as well as a new five foot wide sidewalk along a portion of Wendover Avenue.

Associated with these site improvements, the applicant proposes to increase the number of full-time staff from 60 to 75. There will be no increase in enrollment from the current permitted limit of 400 students. Enrollment is currently at approximately 310 students.

The proposal is illustrated on the attached set of plans that includes 20 sheets prepared by Site Engineering Concepts, LLC dated November 11, 2019, last revised December 20, 2019. The following documents were also submitted: a Transportation Impact Study prepared by Traffic Planning & Design dated November 11, 2019 and architectural elevations prepared by Wallace Roberts & Todd dated November 11, 2019.

### **Changes since Tentative Sketch Plan Approval**

On June 19, 2019, the Board of Commissioners (BOC) approved the Tentative Sketch Plan. The BOC conditioned its approval on the applicant investigating preservation of the single-family dwelling at 1301 Wendover Avenue, investigating the elimination of eight parking spaces and the reconfiguration of the circular driveway along Wendover Avenue. The BOC also imposed a condition requiring that the proposed academic building shown on the approved Tentative Sketch Plan not be included on the Preliminary Plan for the remainder of the project and requiring the filing of a separate Preliminary Plan application for that phase of the project.

Changes to the attached plan include the following:

- The proposed academic building has been removed from the plan.
- The existing dwelling at 1301 Wendover Avenue is proposed to remain along with a portion of its existing driveway to Wendover Avenue. The house will continue to be used as a residential dwelling.
- The number of surface parking spaces along Wendover Avenue has been reduced from 58 to 44 for a total reduction of 14 spaces.
- Installation of a new two-way driveway onto Wendover Avenue to access the 44 space parking lot.
- The addition proposed onto the existing gymnasium/multi-purpose building has been increased in size from 7,700 sq. ft. to 11,359 sq. ft.
- An existing pool at 1315 Wendover Avenue is proposed to remain to be used by the school during its summer camp.
- A mulch path has been added through the buffer.
- A new segment of sidewalk has been added perpendicular to Montgomery Avenue along the internal drive aisle through the site.

### **Project Background**

The project is intended to modernize the campus and accommodate the existing students on campus. Students currently go off campus to Rosemont and Bryn Mawr Colleges to use their athletic fields, the availability of which has diminished over time. Additional space is also needed because the existing multipurpose building is inadequate to support the number of sports and extracurricular activities at the school. The new hard-surfaced play area next to the multipurpose building will provide a space for older students to enjoy recreation separate from the younger students. Finally, the proposed new carriage house will provide storage space for sports equipment.

### **Property Descriptions**

The existing campus is improved with several buildings, including the academic “Tudor Building,” which is listed on the Township’s Historic Resource Inventory as a Class II resource. The campus also contains a small artificial turf field, various parking areas, driveways and walkways. Brief descriptions of the buildings on the properties that are the subject of this application are below.

- 1344 W. Montgomery Avenue is a 286,934 sq. ft. (6.6 acre) lot improved with the existing school facility which is a Class II Historic Resource. According to the Lower Merion Historical Society, the building was constructed between 1900-1908 from a design likely by F. Hopkinson Evans and Frank G. Caldwell for Lancelot F. Sims. It is a large 2 ½ story Tudor Revival building. No changes are proposed to this building.
- 1320 W. Montgomery Avenue is a 67,406 sq. ft. (1.5 acre) lot improved with a single family residence and detached garage/carriage house. The property is a Class II Historic Resource. According to the Historic Resource Inventory the dwelling was constructed ca. 1900 for Mary and Henry Stokes Williams from a design by Baily & Truscott. The dwelling is a Queen Anne/Arts and Crafts style home. This building is proposed to be demolished.
- 1309 Wendover Avenue is a 40,278 sq. ft. (.92 acre) lot improved with a single-family detached dwelling and a detached garage/carriage house. The property is a Class II Historic Resource. The dwelling, a Queen Anne/Shingle style building, was constructed ca. 1894. This building is proposed to be demolished.
- 1319 Wendover Avenue is a 31,244 sq. ft. (.72 acre) lot improved with a single-family detached dwelling designed by Kneedler, Mirick & Zantzinger in 1940 for Harley Rankin, Esq. This building is proposed to be demolished.

- 1315 Wendover Avenue is a 24,078 sq. ft. (.55 acre) lot improved with a single-family detached dwelling built in 1968. This building is proposed to be demolished.
- 1301 Wendover Avenue is a 20,604 sq. ft. (.47 acre) lot improved with a single-family detached dwelling built ca. 1881-1887 for K. Kochersperger. This building is proposed to be preserved and adaptively reused.
- 1291 Wendover Avenue is an 18,196 sq. ft. (.42 acre) vacant lot.
- 1295 Wendover Avenue is an 18,063 sq. ft. (.41 acre) vacant lot.
- 1326 W. Montgomery Avenue is a 22,106 sq. ft. (.51 acre) lot improved with a single-family detached dwelling built in 1962. This building is proposed to be demolished.

### **Zoning Summary and Approvals**

The applicant appeared before the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) on September 19, 2019 to present the revised plans.

The ZHB granted the following relief for the project:

1. A special exception to expand an accredited educational institution.
2. A special exception to allow the existing driveway serving 1301 Wendover Avenue and the new driveway onto Wendover Avenue to penetrate the front yard to reach a parking area.

The following condition was imposed on the project in the original ZHB order:

1. The basketball court assembly space and the proposed addition to the multipurpose building described at the hearing not being used simultaneously for public assembly.

### **Environmental Advisory Council**

The EAC reviewed the plan at their December 17, 2019 meeting. The EAC supports the inclusion of rain gardens and the use of native plants.

### **Historical Commission Review (HC)**

The applicant appeared before the HC on November 25, 2019. The Commission commended the applicant for retaining 1301 Wendover Avenue and encouraged inclusion of the building on the Historic Resource Inventory.

The Commission supported the general location and siting of the proposed carriage house and encouraged the applicant to re-use materials, general features or configurations from the existing carriage houses that are being demolished and integrate them into the new building to make it more sympathetic to the residence being retained.

The Commission supports the full retention, moving, and modification of smaller scale historic buildings. The Commission feels that the retention of the building and the scale of the proposed carriage house will mitigate some of the impact of the changes relating to the adjacent residential community. The Commission renews its urging of the applicant to salvage the materials or architectural features of the buildings being demolished. The Commission provided the applicant with feedback relating to the proposed new architectural addition to the existing gymnasium, including the materials, general massing, and location of the proposed structure. The Commission requires documentation of the listed historic resources to be demolished, including a measured footprint, as well as photographs of all elevations and details, including any interior details of architectural note, as per the mitigation recommendations of the consultant's study.

## Montgomery County Planning Commission

The County's review is attached, and their comments have been incorporated into the issues discussed below or have been included as recommended conditions of approval.

### Bulk & Setback Requirements

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

R-2 Requirements	Maximum Permitted/Required	Proposed Consolidated Lots
Minimum Net Lot Area	18,000 sq. ft.	11 acres 480,341 sq. ft.
Minimum Lot Width	95'	<95'
Maximum Building Area	18%	11.1% (53,317 sq. ft.)
Minimum Front Yard	40'	40'
Minimum Side Yard	12'/35' aggregate	25'*
Rear Yard	25'	N/A**
Maximum Impervious Surface	24% (115,365 sq. ft.)***	31.3% (150,168 sq. ft.)***
Landscape Buffer	20' minimum along side/rear yard setbacks-50' maximum	50'
Parking	78	113 (139 with the auxiliary spaces)
Building Height	65'****	35'

\* For any building other than a single-family detached dwelling or a building accessory thereto, there shall be two side yards, one on each side of the principal building, neither of which shall be less than 25 feet wide.

\*\*Because of the way that the property is configured, there is no rear yard.

\*\*\*The allowable impervious surface in the R2 zoning district is 24%. Several of the existing lots exceed the underlying impervious surface and are therefore nonconforming. In addition, their nonconforming status enables the applicant to take advantage of the 1% impervious surface increase. The nonconforming impervious surface may continue as determined by the Zoning Officer.

\*\*\*\*Subject to setback and impervious surface penalties.

## Issues

### 1. Changes to the Plan

Staff commends the applicant for the extent of the changes made to the plan including but not limited to the preservation of the house at 1301 Wendover Avenue, the removal of the academic building from the plan and the reduction in the number of parking spaces along Wendover Avenue. Staff notes that due to the extent of the changes the applicant was required to appear in front of the Zoning Hearing Board again which delayed the project but resulted in an improved site plan.

### 2. Pedestrian Connectivity

As noted above, the plan shows a new five foot wide sidewalk and an eight foot wide verge along the newly acquired properties on Wendover Avenue. The following conditions were imposed on the Tentative Sketch Plan approval by the Board of Commissioners regarding pedestrian connections on the site:

- *The applicant shall provide logical pedestrian connections through the site in lieu of installing sidewalks along the portion of Wendover Avenue between Montgomery Avenue and the existing site driveway on Wendover Avenue. These connections shall be shown on the Preliminary Plan.*
- *Access to and through the site from the existing public sidewalks shall be shown on the Preliminary Plan.*

To address these conditions of approval, the plan shows a proposed four foot wide mulch path through the required buffer on the southeastern portion of the site. The applicant also added an additional length of sidewalk along the main driveway through the site to enhance access to and through the site from the existing public sidewalks.

### **3. Landscape Plan**

As noted in staff's review of the Tentative Sketch Plan, the landscape plan should ensure that the institutional edge/transitional area is designed to mitigate off-site externalities of the proposed expansion on the surrounding residential neighborhood through landscaping, fencing and sensitive design of the improvements. The landscaped edges of the property should be designed as a naturalized ecosystem and should incorporate existing mature trees into the required buffer where possible.

Staff has the following additional comments on the landscape plan:

- The applicant should consider replacing the Green Giant Arborvitae located in front of the proposed carriage house and at the end of the proposed driveway serving the carriage house with an assortment of native evergreen trees to increase biodiversity and species richness.
- The applicant shall replace the deciduous canopy tree labeled as QUA – *Quercus bicolor*, Swamp White Oak located at the entrance curve into the proposed carriage house driveway with *Carpinus caroliniana*, American hornbeam.

### **4. Relief**

The applicant seeks the following relief:

- a. Stormwater Management & Erosion Control Code Section 121-5.A.1 — to allow the field to be constructed in one phase and allow the maximum bare areas to exceed twenty-five (25%) percent of the total area at any one time.

The applicant initially sought the following relief but after discussing with the Township Engineer it was determined that the relief is not needed.

- b. Stormwater Management & Erosion Control Code Section 121-4.E.2.c — to not require the seepage beds to empty the total design storm volume in twenty-four (24) hours or less.

### **5. Action**

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

1. A recommendation on the Preliminary Plan.