

May 22, 2020

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Planning Staff, Department of Building & Planning

SUBJECT: LOT LINE CHANGE – 746 & 750 MT. MORO ROAD, VILLANOVA, 3858, Ward 6.

This application was submitted under the zoning in place prior to February 27th and is not subject to the new zoning code requirements.

Proposal

The applicant and owner, Wynrhys Coghlan, is seeking a lot line change approval for the following:

- To transfer 18,734 square feet from 750 Mt. Moro Road to 746 Mt. Moro Road. The area to be transferred contains a two-story detached garage with a 1,393 sq. ft. footprint.

The proposal is illustrated on the attached plan, prepared by Yerkes Associates, Inc. dated January 24, 2019.

Property Description

The two properties totaling 164,448 sq. ft. (3.8 acres) are located along Mt. Moro Road in Villanova. The properties are zoned RA and are bound to the north and east by the Township owned Appleford Estate, and other similar single-family residences to the south and west of the properties.

- 746 Mt. Moro Road is improved with a two-story single-family residence with a 3,132 sq. ft. footprint, an inground pool, and a driveway extending from Mt. Moro Road.
- 750 Mt. Moro Road, is a rear lot that is currently accessed from a driveway extending from Mt. Moro Road. The property also contains frontage to an unimproved section of Cedar Lane in the rear of the property. The property is improved with a two-story detached garage with a 1,393 sq. ft. footprint, which is currently being utilized as a dwelling.

Project Description

Following the Lot Line change the garage currently located on 750 Mt. Moro Road will be re-situated on 746 Mt. Moro Road and 750 Mt. Moro Road will be vacant. No future improvements are shown to 750 Mt. Moro with this proposal.



Property History

The Township's Preservation Planner provided the below property history. While the description is lengthy, the Planning Commission should take from it that the detached garage on 750 Mt. Moro Road was originally located on the same property and associated with the dwelling on 746 Mt. Moro Road and that both structures are eligible for inclusion on the Township's Historic Resource Inventory as Class II Resources.

The largest single property in Lower Merion Township in the 1890s was the 800-acre "Stoke Pogis," or "Red Rose Farm" in Villanova. Frederick Phillips intended to build a sizable artists' colony there in the mold of Arden and Rose Valley. The grand vision was not to be. The land was later divided by the Villa Nova Company with a smattering of homes designed by the notable architectural firm Baily & Bassett. Most new homes were created in the Tudor Revival style, though one was a faithful recreation of George Washington's Mount Vernon.

When the land was developed several historic structures were left standing and enlarged, including Appleford (now the centerpiece of a Township park), an old stagecoach-era inn called "Stoke Pogis," and a farmhouse that was named "Westfield." This former farmhouse is now 549 Mt. Moro Road.

Several homes that were part of the Villa Nova Company development are currently designated historic resources, including "Eastfield" (764 Mt. Moro Road, Class 2) and its former carriage house (768 Mt. Moro Road, Class 2), "Appleford" (Class 1), and "Overview" (1218 Valley Road, Class 2).

The structure at 750 Mt. Moro Road was originally the garage for 746 Mt. Moro Road. Atlases indicate that it may have been built between 1900 and 1908, though it has not been assessed in detail. The property was later subdivided placing each structure on its own parcel.

746 Mt. Moro Road was deemed eligible for Class 2 designation in the original Historic Resource Inventory and was assigned a number on the HRI, but it was not included in the final list of designated properties.

Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) Review

The County review letter is attached. MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal. The County recommendations have been either addressed on the attached plan or have been incorporated into the issues below as well as the recommended conditions of approval.

Zoning

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

RA Zoning District		Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
		746 Mt Moro Rd		750 Mt Moro Rd	
Minimum Net Lot Area (sq. ft.)	45,000 (1 acre)	60,705 (1.4 acres)	79,514 (1.8 acres)	103,743 (2.4 acres)	84,933 (2 acres)
Minimum Lot Width	150'	204'	204'	24'*	24'*
Maximum Building Area	15%	5.2 %	5.7%	1.3%	0%
Minimum Front Yard	50'	104'	104'	<50'***	50'
Minimum Side Yard & Aggregate Side yard	15'/40'	28'/102'	43'/102	35'/38**	15'/40'
Minimum Rear Yard	25'	>25'	38'	25'	25'
Maximum Impervious Surface	20%	18.2%	19.9%	7.0%	2.5%

* 750 Moro Road, is an existing rear lot with 24.3 feet at the Mt. Moro street line. A rear lot is defined as a narrow lot which shall have less than the required width at the street line and at the building line but which meets the minimum width at the point of the proposed building closest to the street and extending the full depth of the building plus 25 feet.

**Existing non-conforming.

Issues

1. Historic Resource Inventory

As outlined in Property Background section, 746 Mt. Moro Road was deemed eligible for Class 2 designation in the original Historic Resource Inventory in the late 1990's and was assigned a number on the HRI, but it was not included in the final list of designated properties.

Staff believes that 746 Mt. Moro Road would still qualify for Class 2 designation based on the following current designation criteria:

- 1. Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the Township, county, region, commonwealth or nation;*
- 2. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of neighborhood, community or Township;*
- 3. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community;*
- 4. Is part of or related to a commercial center, park, community or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif.*

The Zoning Code includes incentive uses and bulk and setback flexibility for Historic Resources, that could provide greater usability to existing structures, including the detached garage. Staff has included a condition of approval requiring the applicant to investigate adding 746 Mt. Moro Road to the Historic Resource Inventory.

2. Relief

The application requires the following relief:

- A. [Subdivision and Land Development Code Section §135-18.B\(6\)](#), to not show any improvements including building, stormwater and sewer on the proposed lot 750 Mt. Moro Road.

Staff has included a condition requiring the second stage plan approval when the property at 750 Mt. Moro Road is improved and is therefore supportive of this relief.

- B. [Subdivision & Land Development Code Section 135-35](#), to create an irregular lot line.

Staff notes that the property is currently irregular in shape and that the proposed lot line change reduces the irregularity.

- C. [Sewers Code Section 126-6.1](#), to allow the sanitary lateral serving Lot 1 to cross over Lot 2 via an easement.

Staff recommends that relief be sought from [Sewers Code Section 126-6.1](#) to allow any potential future sanitary lateral to be located in an easement. 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.

Action

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

1. Provide a recommendation on the Lot Line Change Plan.
2. Provide a recommendation on the relief from:
 - a. [Subdivision and Land Development Code Section §135-18.B\(6\)](#), to not show any improvements including building, stormwater and sewer on the proposed lot 750 Mt. Moro Road.
 - b. [Subdivision & Land Development Code Section 135-35](#), to create an irregular lot line.
 - c. [Sewers Code Section 126-6.1](#), to allow the sanitary lateral serving Lot 1 to cross over Lot 2 via an easement.