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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

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JODY L. HOLTON, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 6, 2018

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

Re: MCPC #13-0160-003
Plan Name: Student Life and Wellness Center
(21,000 sq. ft. institutional on approximately 16.0 acres)
Situate: Merion Avenue (S); New Gulph Road (W)
Township of Lower Merion

Dear Mr. Leswing:

We have reviewed the above-referenced tentative sketch plan as you requested on July 25, 2018. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing health center, Pagoda building, and Cartref building on the Bryn Mawr College campus and construct a new two-story wellness center with a total building area of approximately 21,000 square feet. Additional improvements shown at this time include: a new vehicular driveway off of New Gulph Road near the proposed wellness center, a parking lot with 16 parking spaces off of North Roberts Road, an underground stormwater management basin, and rearrangement of the pedestrian walkways. The property is located in the Township's R2 Residence zoning district.



RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission generally supports the proposed construction of a new wellness center for the Bryn Mawr College. However, in the course of our review we identified the following issues that we feel should be addressed prior to moving forward with the land development. Our review comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing health center and construct a new wellness center further back from New Gulph Road in the vicinity of the existing health center. However, the applicant also proposes to demolish the Cartref and Pagoda buildings near the intersection of Merion Avenue and New Gulph Road. These buildings are both listed as “Additional Buildings in District” on the original National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the Bryn Mawr College Historic District. According to this document, the Cartref building was built in 1885 as the residence of the first president of the college, James E. Rhoads, and the Pagoda building was built in 1913 and was originally used as a classroom for an open air model school.

The demolition of these buildings does not appear to be necessary for the construction of the proposed wellness center. We strongly encourage the applicant to work with the Township to explore the opportunity to preserve the historic Cartref and Pagoda buildings and evaluate the applicability of incentives provided for in Article XXVIA of the Township’s Zoning Ordinance and Historic Resource Overlay District.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The applicant proposes to expand the vehicular driveway off of North Roberts Road in the vicinity of the Pensby Center and construct a 16 space parking area. The expansion of the vehicular driveway off of North Roberts Road will necessitate the relocation of an existing crosswalk across North Roberts Road connecting to the Brecon Hall. Future versions of the plans should show how this important pedestrian linkage will be maintained.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant’s proposal to construct a new wellness center for the Bryn Mawr College; however, we strongly encourage the applicant to explore ways to preserve some of the existing historic structures as part of the proposed 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.

Sincerely,

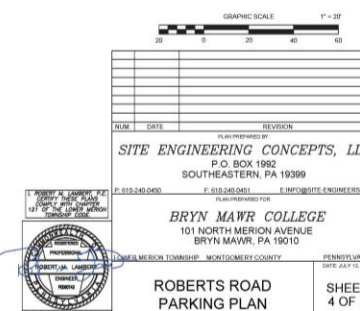
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marley B Bice". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

c: Bryn Mawr College, Applicant
George Broseman, Applicant's Representative
Site Engineering Concepts, 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 Site Plan – Wellness Center
Attachment B: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Site Plan – Roberts Road Parking
Attachment C: Aerial Image of Site







Student Life and Wellness Center
130160003

Montgomery
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Planning
Commission

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Year 2015 aerial photography provided by the
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

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