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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 10, 2024

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

Re: MCPC #24-0082-001
Plan Name: 727-731 Montgomery Avenue
(7,500 sq. ft. commercial on approximately 0.44 acres)
Situate: Montgomery Avenue (N); east of Woodbine Avenue
Lower Merion Township

Dear Mr. Leswing:

We have reviewed the above-referenced tentative sketch plan as you requested on April 9, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, SARA Holdings, LLC, proposes to consolidate two existing lots at 727 and 731 Montgomery Avenue and construct a two-story, mixed-use commercial building. The proposed building will have approximately 1,500 square feet of retail space on the ground floor and 6,000 square feet of medical office space on the second floor, mostly cantilevered over a surface parking lot containing 24 parking spaces. All existing structures on the combined properties are proposed to be removed. Additional improvements shown at this time include sidewalks, street trees, and an underground stormwater management facility. The property is located in the township's VC Village Center zoning district.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The Land Use Element of the 2016 Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan identifies this property as Commercial. Furthermore, the Commercial Land Use Element of the Township Comprehensive Plan identifies the Narberth-Penn Valley commercial area as a Neighborhood Main Street. The proposed development

appears to be consistent with the desired form of Neighborhood Main Street commercial areas because it is a low-rise building with a ground floor commercial use and a landscaped front yard.

In addition, this area of the township is identified as a Town Center in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*. Town Center areas are traditional downtown areas with a mix of retail, institutional, office, and residential uses. The proposed building placement appears to be consistent with the criteria that buildings in Town Center areas be pedestrian-oriented with buildings built close to the sidewalk and parking located to the rear of buildings.

RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) generally supports the applicant's proposal. However, in the course of our review we have identified the following issues that the applicant and Lower Merion Township may wish to consider prior to final plan approval. Our review comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

ZONING ORDINANCE COMMENTS

Based on the information provided, we have identified the following items related to the township's zoning ordinance that we feel should be addressed as part of any future land development submissions associated with this property:

A. Frontage Yard Type. Table 4.3.1. establishes permitted frontage yard types for the VC zoning district. Future submissions should include additional information about the proposed frontage yard type.

B. Façade Type. Table 4.3.1. establishes permitted façade types for the VC zoning district. Future submissions should include additional information about the proposed façade type.

C. Landscape Buffer. Section 155-3.10.B. requires that a landscape buffer be provided in compliance with the standards in Chapter 135. Future submissions should include a landscape plan demonstrating compliance with the landscape buffer requirement, as applicable.

D. Parking Drive Aisle Width. Table 8.5.1. contains minimum parking lot dimensions. The parking lot drive aisle appears to narrow to approximately 12 feet in width in front of the four parking spaces closest to the driveway entrance. A drive aisle of 20 feet in width is required for a one-way, single-loaded drive aisle with perpendicular parking. If there is a reciprocal access easement on the adjacent property to the east that allows for this configuration, we suggest that it be clearly shown on the site plan.

E. Bicycle Parking. Table 8.7.1. contains minimum bicycle parking requirements based on the amount and type of development proposed. Future submissions should demonstrate compliance with the bicycle parking requirements, as applicable.

F. Canopy Projection into Front Yard. Section 155-3.6.B.(3) contains standards for permitted projections. It appears that the proposed canopy that projects into the required minimum front yard may exceed the maximum dimensions for such projections.

G. Architecture Standards. Future versions of the plans should demonstrate how the applicant proposes to comply with all relevant architecture standards contained in §155-3.9 of the township's zoning ordinance, including building materials and storefront design.

H. Greening Standards. Future versions of the plans should demonstrate how the applicant proposes to comply with the greening standards, as required by §155-3.10.E. of the township's zoning ordinance.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE COMMENTS

Based on the information provided, we have identified the following items related to the township's subdivision and land development ordinance that we feel should be addressed as part of any future land development submissions associated with this property:

A. Sidewalk across Driveway. Section 135-4.9.F.(2)(a) requires that "the grade and paving of the sidewalk shall be continuous across driveways." Future versions of the plan should be revised to show the grade and pavement material of the proposed sidewalk along Montgomery Avenue extending across the driveway.

B. Shared Access. Section 135-4.9.Q.(5)(a) states that "when two or more abutting lots share an access driveway, the driveway should be designed as the main access to those lots, and one or more existing access driveways shall be closed." More information is needed on the access easement shown on the site plan and how it relates to the adjacent property to the east and whether additional driveway consolidation could be possible.

C. Drive Aisle Width. Section 135-4.9.Q.(6)(b) states that "drive aisles along other nonresidential buildings shall be a minimum paved width of 22 feet, except where a dropoff/pickup lane is proposed." The one-way drive aisle along the rear portion of the building is only 10 feet wide.

D. Pedestrian Access within Parking Lot. Section 135-4.9.Q.(7) contains standards for pedestrian pathways and crosswalks that apply to all surface parking lots with 10 or more new parking spaces. The proposed site plan does not appear to provide a 5-foot-wide pedestrian pathway from the far end of the parking lot to the main entry of the building that is clearly separated from vehicular use areas.

E. Street Trees. Section 135-5.1.C.(7) states that street trees shall be planted at a rate of at least one tree per 30 feet of street frontage, or portion thereof. Based on the site's frontage length of 98 feet, four street trees should be provided; however, only three street trees are shown.

   Section 135-5.1.C. requires that street trees either be planted in tree pits of at least 5-feet by 5-feet or within a verge of at least 6-feet in width. It does not appear that the proposed individual tree pit openings meet the minimum dimensions. We suggest that the four required street trees be planted in a continuous verge which can improve tree health, enhance natural rainwater infiltration, and serve to buffer pedestrians on the sidewalk from passing vehicular traffic.

   Future submissions should include information demonstrating compliance with the minimum soil volume requirement for street trees as required by §135-5.1C.(3) of the township's subdivision and land development ordinance.

F. Landscape Plan. In general, future submissions should include a landscape plan demonstrating compliance with all applicable landscaping requirements in the township's subdivision and land development ordinance, including the buffer planting requirements (§135-5.2), parking lot greening standards (§135-5.3), and greening standards (§135-5.5).

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

We suggest that the applicant work with township staff to explore how loading/unloading and trash pick-up will be conducted on the site and ensure there will be adequate vertical clearance under the cantilevered portion of the building for delivery/trash trucks and emergency vehicles, as applicable.

PARKING LOT DESIGN

A. Amount of Parking. Section 135-8.2.B. of the township's subdivision and land development ordinance provides for the option to reduce the minimum required parking where parking is shared between multiple uses on a single property. Since the proposal contains both retail and office uses, the applicant may wish to consider whether the amount of parking required on the site could be reduced.

B. Wheel Stops or Curbing Needed. It is unclear from the information provided how the edge of the surface parking lot will be defined. If the parking lot will not be curbed, we suggest that wheel stops be used to define the edge of the parking lot.

C. ADA Parking Access. A marked crosswalk and ADA curb ramp should be provided from the designated ADA parking space to the building entrance. If different entrances are provided for the retail and office spaces, ADA access should be provided for both entrances.

D. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations. Although not required by the township's subdivision and land development ordinance for parking lots with less than 25 parking spaces, we encourage the applicant to consider incorporating an electric vehicle charging station into the parking lot.

RETAIL SPACE DESIGN & ACCESS

In order to make the proposed retail space more welcoming to customers and passers-by, we suggest that the retail space be provided with a separate entrance from the elevator lobby to the medical office space above. Having two, articulated pedestrian entrances along the Montgomery Avenue frontage of the building could also improve the building's façade articulation.

It is unclear from the information provided whether an entrance to the retail space would be provided in the rear of the building closest to the parking lot. If the only retail entrance is along the Montgomery Avenue frontage, an ADA accessible sidewalk should be provided from the parking lot to the pedestrian entrance to the retail space.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the proposed development; however, we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Lower Merion Township's planning objectives for commercial 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 (#24-0082-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

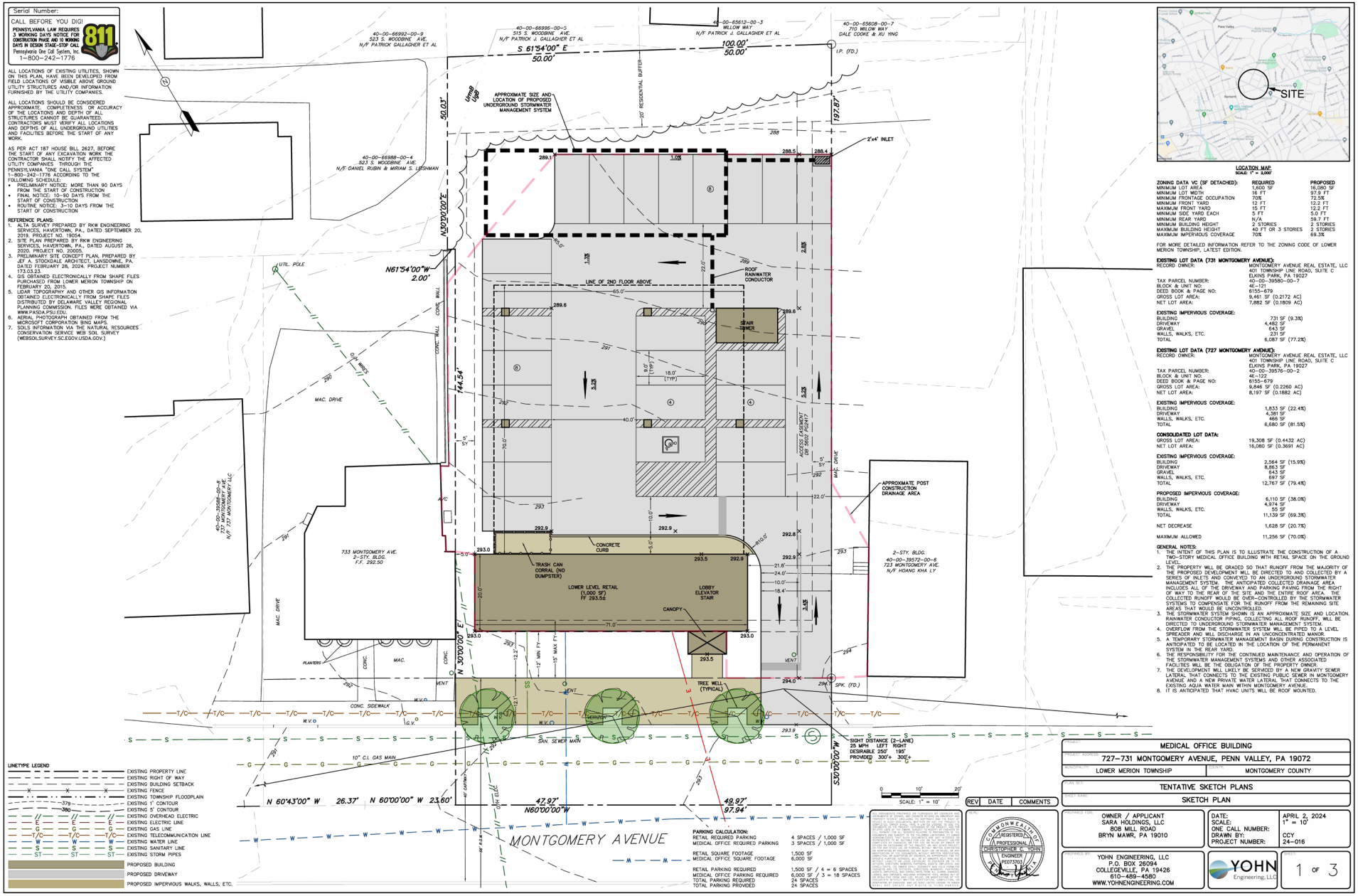
Sincerely,

Marley B Bice

Marley Bice, AICP, Community Planning Assistant Manager
610-278-3740 – marley.bice@montgomerycountypa.gov

c: SARA Holdings, LLC, Applicant
Yohn Engineering, LLC, Applicant's Engineer
Gilbert P. High, Jr., Esq., Twp. Solicitor
Ernie B. McNeely, Twp. Manager
Jody Kelley, Twp. Secretary
Joseph Mastronardo, P.E., Twp. Engineer
Charlie Doyle, Twp. Asst. Dir. of Planning
Colleen Hall, Twp. Senior Planner
Jillian Puleo-Dierks, Twp. Senior Planner
Greg Prichard, Twp. Historic Preservation Planner
Holly Colello, Twp. Planner
Sarah Carley, Twp. Planner

Attachment A: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Proposed Site Plan
Attachment B: Aerial Image of Site


Serial Number:
CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!
PENNSYLVANIA LAW REQUIRES 3 WORKING DAYS NOTICE FOR CONSTRUCTION PHASE AND 10 WORKING DAYS IN DESIGN STAGE-STOP CALL
Pennsylvania One Call System, Inc.
1-800-242-1776
811
ALL LOCATIONS OF EXISTING UTILITIES, SHOWN ON THIS PLAN, HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FROM FIELD LOCATIONS OF VISIBLE ABOVE GROUND UTILITY STRUCTURES AND/OR INFORMATION FURNISHED BY THE UTILITY COMPANIES.
ALL LOCATIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED APPROXIMATE. COMPLETENESS OR ACCURACY OF THE LOCATIONS AND DEPTH OF ALL STRUCTURES CANNOT BE GUARANTEED. CONTRACTORS MUST VERIFY ALL LOCATIONS AND DEPTHS OF ALL UNDERGROUND UTILITIES AND FACILITIES BEFORE THE START OF ANY WORK.
AS PER ACT 187 HOUSE BILL 2627, BEFORE THE START OF ANY EXCAVATION WORK THE CONTRACTOR SHALL NOTIFY THE AFFECTED UTILITY COMPANIES THROUGH THE PENNSYLVANIA "ONE CALL SYSTEM" 1-800-242-1776 ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE:
• PRELIMINARY NOTICE: MORE THAN 90 DAYS FROM THE START OF CONSTRUCTION
• FINAL NOTICE: 10-90 DAYS FROM THE START OF CONSTRUCTION
• ROUTINE NOTICE: 3-10 DAYS FROM THE START OF CONSTRUCTION
REFERENCE PLANS:
1. ALTA SURVEY PREPARED BY RKW ENGINEERING SERVICES, HAVERTOWN, PA., DATED SEPTEMBER 20, 2019. PROJECT NO. 19054.
2. SITE PLAN PREPARED BY RKW ENGINEERING SERVICES, HAVERTOWN, PA., DATED AUGUST 26, 2020. PROJECT NO. 20005.
3. PRELIMINARY SITE CONCEPT PLAN, PREPARED BY JEF A. STOCKDALE ARCHITECT, LANSDOWNE, PA. DATED FEBRUARY 28, 2024. PROJECT NUMBER 173.03.23.
4. GIS OBTAINED ELECTRONICALLY FROM SHAPE FILES PURCHASED FROM LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP ON FEBRUARY 20, 2015.
5. LIDAR TOPOGRAPHY AND OTHER GIS INFORMATION OBTAINED ELECTRONICALLY FROM SHAPE FILES DISTRIBUTED BY DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION. FILES WERE OBTAINED VIA WWW.PASDA.PSU.EDU.
6. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OBTAINED FROM THE MICROSOFT CORPORATION BING MAPS.
7. SOILS INFORMATION VIA THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE WEB SOIL SURVEY (WEBSOILSURVEY.SC.EGOV.USDA.GOV.)
40-00-66992-00-9 523 S. WOODBINE AVE. N/F PATRICK GALLAGHER ET AL
40-00-66995-00-5 515 S. WOODBINE AVE. N/F PATRICK J. GALLAGHER ET AL
40-00-65612-00-3 WILLOW WAY N/F PATRICK J. GALLAGHER ET AL
40-00-65608-00-7 710 WILLOW WAY DALE COOKE & XU YING
40-00-66988-00-4 523 S. WOODBINE AVE. N/F DANIEL RUBIN & MIRIAM S. LEISHMAN
40-00-39586-00-8 737 MONTGOMERY AVE. N/F 737 MONTGOMERY LLC
733 MONTGOMERY AVE. 2-STY. BLDG. F.F. 292.50
2-STY. BLDG. 40-00-39572-00-6 723 MONTGOMERY AVE. N/F HOANG KHA LY
S 61°54'00" E 50.00'
100.00' 50.00'
I.P. (FD.)
N30°00'00"E 50.03'
N61°54'00"W 2.00'
144.54'
S30°00'00"W 197.87'
N 30°00'00" E 47.97'
N60°00'00"W 49.97'
97.94'
N 60°43'00" W 26.37'
N 60°00'00" W 23.60'
APPROXIMATE SIZE AND LOCATION OF PROPOSED UNDERGROUND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
20' RESIDENTIAL BUFFER
2'x4' INLET
UTIL. POLE
CONC. WALL
MAC. DRIVE
ROOF RAINWATER CONDUCTOR
LINE OF 2ND FLOOR ABOVE
STAIR TOWER
ACCESS EASEMENT DB 5610 PG 2417
APPROXIMATE POST CONSTRUCTION DRAINAGE AREA
CONCRETE CURB
TRASH CAN CORRAL (NO DUMPSTER)
LOWER LEVEL RETAIL (1,000 SF) FF 293.58
LOBBY ELEVATOR STAIR
CANOPY
PLANTERS
CONC.
MAC.
VENT
TREE WELL (TYPICAL)
SPK. (FD.)
CONC. SIDEWALK
W.V.O.
SAN. SEWER MAIN
10" C.I. GAS MAIN
MONTGOMERY AVENUE
SIGHT DISTANCE (2-LANE) 25 MPH LEFT RIGHT DESIRABLE 250' 195' PROVIDED 300'+ 300'+
SCALE: 1" = 10'
PARKING CALCULATION:
RETAIL REQUIRED PARKING 4 SPACES / 1,000 SF
MEDICAL OFFICE REQUIRED PARKING 3 SPACES / 1,000 SF
RETAIL SQUARE FOOTAGE 1,500 SF
MEDICAL OFFICE SQUARE FOOTAGE 6,000 SF
RETAIL PARKING REQUIRED 1,500 SF / 4 = 6 SPACES
MEDICAL OFFICE PARKING REQUIRED 6,000 SF / 3 = 18 SPACES
TOTAL PARKING REQUIRED 24 SPACES
TOTAL PARKING PROVIDED 24 SPACES
LINETYPE LEGEND
EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
EXISTING BUILDING SETBACK
EXISTING FENCE
EXISTING TOWNSHIP FLOODPLAIN
EXISTING 1' CONTOUR
EXISTING 5' CONTOUR
EXISTING OVERHEAD ELECTRIC
EXISTING ELECTRIC LINE
EXISTING GAS LINE
EXISTING TELECOMMUNICATION LINE
EXISTING WATER LINE
EXISTING SANITARY LINE
EXISTING STORM PIPES
PROPOSED BUILDING
PROPOSED DRIVEWAY
PROPOSED IMPERVIOUS WALKS, WALLS, ETC.
SITE
LOCATION MAP
SCALE: 1" = 2,000'
ZONING DATA VC (SF DETACHED):
REQUIRED PROPOSED
MINIMUM LOT AREA 1,600 SF 16,080 SF
MINIMUM LOT WIDTH 16 FT 97.9 FT
MINIMUM FRONTAGE OCCUPATION 70% 72.5%
MINIMUM FRONT YARD 12 FT 12.2 FT
MAXIMUM FRONT YARD 15 FT 12.2 FT
MINIMUM SIDE YARD EACH 5 FT 5.0 FT
MINIMUM REAR YARD N/A 59.7 FT
MINIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT 2 STORIES 2 STORIES
MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT 40 FT OR 3 STORIES 2 STORIES
MAXIMUM IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE 70% 69.3%
FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION REFER TO THE ZONING CODE OF LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP, LATEST EDITION.
EXISTING LOT DATA (731 MONTGOMERY AVENUE):
RECORD OWNER: MONTGOMERY AVENUE REAL ESTATE, LLC 401 TOWNSHIP LINE ROAD, SUITE C ELKINS PARK, PA 19027
TAX PARCEL NUMBER: 40-00-39580-00-7
BLOCK & UNIT NO: 4E-121
DEED BOOK & PAGE NO: 6155-679
GROSS LOT AREA: 9,461 SF (0.2172 AC)
NET LOT AREA: 7,882 SF (0.1809 AC)
EXISTING IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE:
BUILDING 731 SF (9.3%)
DRIVEWAY 4,482 SF
GRAVEL 643 SF
WALLS, WALKS, ETC. 231 SF
TOTAL 6,087 SF (77.2%)
EXISTING LOT DATA (727 MONTGOMERY AVENUE):
RECORD OWNER: MONTGOMERY AVENUE REAL ESTATE, LLC 401 TOWNSHIP LINE ROAD, SUITE C ELKINS PARK, PA 19027
TAX PARCEL NUMBER: 40-00-39576-00-2
BLOCK & UNIT NO: 4E-122
DEED BOOK & PAGE NO: 6155-679
GROSS LOT AREA: 9,846 SF (0.2260 AC)
NET LOT AREA: 8,197 SF (0.1882 AC)
EXISTING IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE:
BUILDING 1,833 SF (22.4%)
DRIVEWAY 4,381 SF
WALLS, WALKS, ETC. 466 SF
TOTAL 6,680 SF (81.5%)
CONSOLIDATED LOT DATA:
GROSS LOT AREA: 19,308 SF (0.4432 AC)
NET LOT AREA: 16,080 SF (0.3691 AC)
EXISTING IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE:
BUILDING 2,564 SF (15.9%)
DRIVEWAY 8,863 SF
GRAVEL 643 SF
WALLS, WALKS, ETC. 697 SF
TOTAL 12,767 SF (79.4%)
PROPOSED IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE:
BUILDING 6,110 SF (38.0%)
DRIVEWAY 4,974 SF
WALLS, WALKS, ETC. 55 SF
TOTAL 11,139 SF (69.3%)
NET DECREASE 1,628 SF (20.7%)
MAXIMUM ALLOWED 11,256 SF (70.0%)
GENERAL NOTES:
1. THE INTENT OF THIS PLAN IS TO ILLUSTRATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TWO-STORY MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING WITH RETAIL SPACE ON THE GROUND LEVEL.
2. THE PROPERTY WILL BE GRADED SO THAT RUNOFF FROM THE MAJORITY OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WILL BE DIRECTED TO AND COLLECTED BY A SERIES OF INLETS AND CONVEYED TO AN UNDERGROUND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. THE ANTICIPATED COLLECTED DRAINAGE AREA INCLUDES ALL OF THE DRIVEWAY AND PARKING PAVING FROM THE RIGHT OF WAY TO THE REAR OF THE SITE AND THE ENTIRE ROOF AREA. THE COLLECTED RUNOFF WOULD BE OVER-CONTROLLED BY THE STORMWATER SYSTEMS TO COMPENSATE FOR THE RUNOFF FROM THE REMAINING SITE AREAS THAT WOULD BE UNCONTROLLED.
3. THE STORMWATER SYSTEM SHOWN IS AN APPROXIMATE SIZE AND LOCATION. RAINWATER CONDUCTOR PIPING, COLLECTING ALL ROOF RUNOFF, WILL BE DIRECTED TO UNDERGROUND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.
4. OVERFLOW FROM THE STORMWATER SYSTEM WILL BE PIPED TO A LEVEL SPREADER AND WILL DISCHARGE IN AN UNCONCENTRATED MANOR.
5. A TEMPORARY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BASIN DURING CONSTRUCTION IS ANTICIPATED TO BE LOCATED IN THE LOCATION OF THE PERMANENT SYSTEM IN THE REAR YARD.
6. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTINUED MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF THE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED FACILITIES WILL BE THE OBLIGATION OF THE PROPERTY OWNER.
7. THE DEVELOPMENT WILL LIKELY BE SERVICED BY A NEW GRAVITY SEWER LATERAL THAT CONNECTS TO THE EXISTING PUBLIC SEWER IN MONTGOMERY AVENUE AND A NEW PRIVATE WATER LATERAL THAT CONNECTS TO THE EXISTING AQUA WATER MAIN WITHIN MONTGOMERY AVENUE.
8. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT HVAC UNITS WILL BE ROOF MOUNTED.
REV DATE COMMENTS
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL CHRISTOPHER C. YOHN ENGINEER PE073703
PROJECT: MEDICAL OFFICE BUILDING
PROJECT ADDRESS: 727-731 MONTGOMERY AVENUE, PENN VALLEY, PA 19072
MUNICIPALITY: LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP
COUNTY: MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLAN SET: TENTATIVE SKETCH PLANS
SHEET NAME: SKETCH PLAN
PREPARED FOR: OWNER / APPLICANT SARA HOLDINGS, LLC 808 MILL ROAD BRYN MAWR, PA 19010
DATE: APRIL 2, 2024
SCALE: 1" = 10'
ONE CALL NUMBER:
DRAWN BY: CCY
PROJECT NUMBER: 24-016
PREPARED BY: YOHN ENGINEERING, LLC P.O. BOX 26094 COLLEGEVILLE, PA 19426 610-489-4580 WWW.YOHNENGINEERING.COM
YOHN Engineering, LLC
SHEET 1 OF 3



727-731 Montgomery Avenue
MCPC#240082001

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
PO Box 311 Norristown PA 19404-0311
(p) 610 278-3722 (f) 610 278-3941
www.montcopa.org/planning
Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

0 50 100 200 Feet

N