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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 4th, 2025

Mr. David Conroy
Zoning Officer & Planning Coordinator
Upper Gwynedd Township
1 Parkside Place
North Wales, Pennsylvania 19454

Re: MCPC #11-0011-012
Plan Name: Merck NW2 BCR Project
(46,250 square feet Limited Industrial on approximately 2.1 acres)
Situate: Dickerson Rd (E); north of Sumneytown Pike
Upper Gwynedd Township

Dear Mr. Conroy:

We have reviewed the above-referenced land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on March 11, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Merck Sharp & Dohme LLC, has submitted a preliminary and final land development plan to construct a 46,250 square foot building on the north side of the Merck Upper Gwynedd Campus at the end of Louise Lane. The proposed plan includes a demolition of an existing facility and the construction of a new two – story building designed to contain cold storage, two small laboratories, and second floor office space. The proposal intends to reduce the amount of existing impervious and will provide additional landscaping and MRC bioretention areas. The site is within the Limited Industrial Zoning District and is served by public water and sewer. The plan is dated March 10th, 2025.

The applicant has obtained zoning variances from front yard setback requirements, and a relief of setback and building height requirements. It has additionally requested 8 waivers for SALDO requirements regarding plan submission, driveway widths, sidewalk requirements, sewer pipes, parking stalls, and landscape islands.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The parcel is shown as Office Light Industrial in the Future Land Use Plan of the *Upper Gwynedd Township 2040 Comprehensive Plan*. Office Light Industrial areas are described as a mixture of office and warehouse or light

industrial space, office parks, business centers, and self-storage facilities. The plan details that as redevelopment occurs, additional amenities and improvements related to green parking and pedestrian circulation will be integrated, where appropriate. This parcel is additionally located within the Transit-Oriented Development overlay of the Future Land Use Plan, which is described as areas of land within ½ mile of a train station, where a mix of land uses is desired, and a greater intensity of development can be accommodated by focusing on enhancing transit connections.

In addition, the property is identified as a Business Area in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*. Business areas are concentrations of employment-oriented land uses, such as offices, research facilities, and industrial parks. The plan further details the parcel as within a ½ mile walk shed of a train station, identified as North Wales Station.

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 Upper Gwynedd Township may wish to consider prior to final plan approval.

Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (SALDO)

1. The standards in §168-33.C.(d) detail the requirement for a minimum variety of species per plant type. For example, if the number of plants required per plant type is 31-50, the minimum number of species required per plant type is 4, and if the number of plants required are 51+, the minimum species required is 6. It appears the existing plan details 52 shrubs consisting of spicebush; therefore 4 species should be provided. We encourage the applicant to provide sufficient plant diversity in alignment with the above regulations.

LANDSCAPING

While the use of native species such as the spicebush can be adequate in some cases, it is an understory shrub and needs partial shade to thrive. Therefore we suggest the applicant ensure spicebush receives the proper conditions to survive, or that another species be considered.

SIDEWALKS

While we have noticed the applicant has requested a waiver for the creation of a new sidewalk alongside Louise Lane, and that appears to make sense due to the existing connections, we hope to note the future potential of greater pedestrian connectivity within the Merck Campus. This parcel is identified within a potential transit-oriented development overlay on the Township Future Land Use Map, although existing connections to the nearby North Wales Station from the parcel and nearby parcels are limited. We encourage the applicant to consider future pedestrian connections in alignment with the Township Comprehensive plan, should an internal need and want be identified.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal, but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Upper Gwynedd Township's planning objectives for limited industrial 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 (#11-0011-012) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

Margaux Petruska

Margaux Petruska, Community Planner II
Margaux.petruska@montgomeryocuntypa.gov – 610-278-3728

c: Merck Sharp & Dohme LLC
Sandra Brookley Zadell, Township Manager
Megan Weaver, Assistant Township Manager

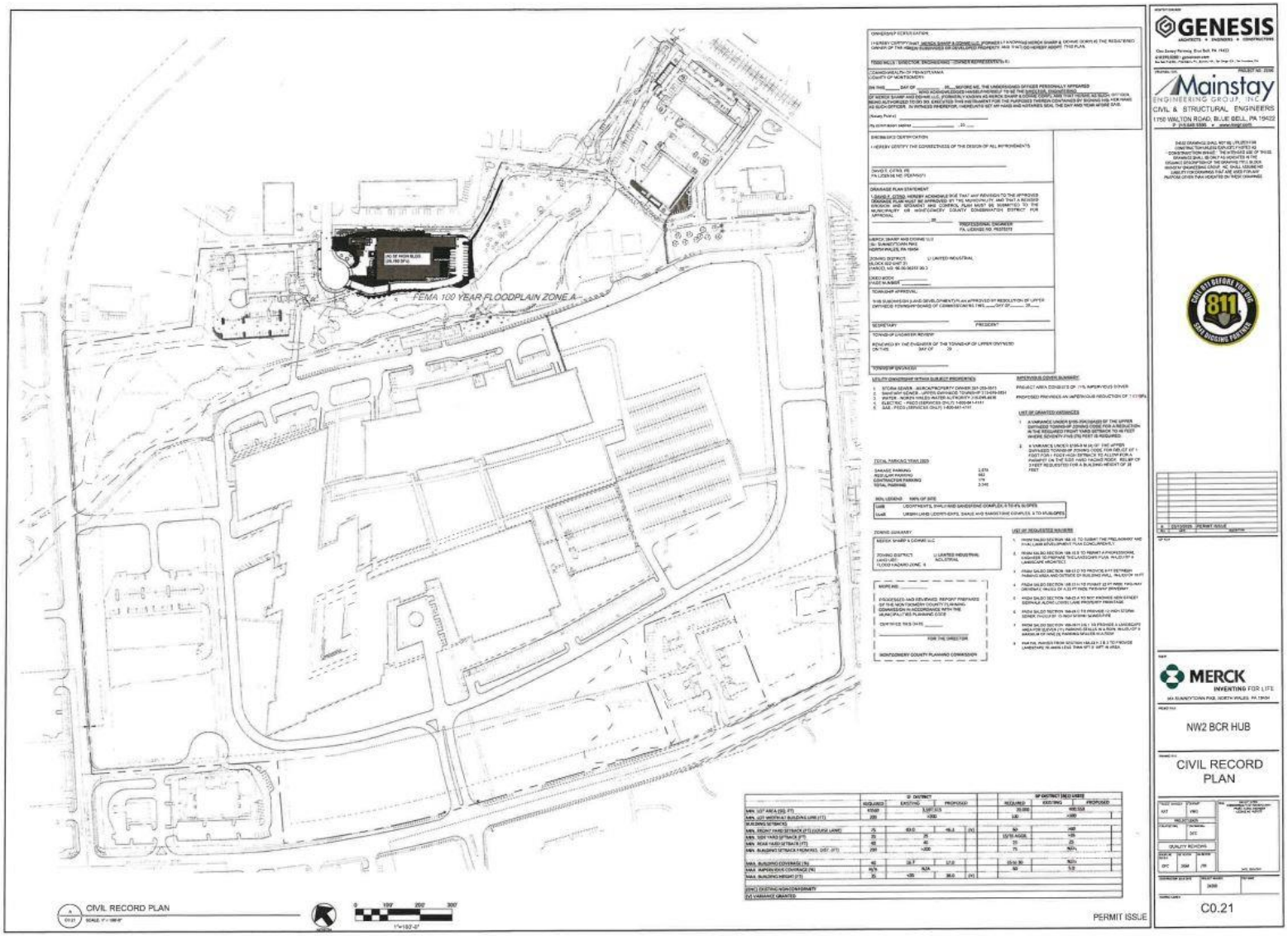
Attachment A: Aerial Image of Site
Attachment B: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Proposed Site Plan

ATTACHMENTS



Merck NW2 BCR Project
MCPC#110011012




FEMA 100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN ZONE A
CIVIL RECORD PLAN
PERMIT ISSUE
GENESIS
Mainstay
ENGINEERING GROUP, INC.
CIVIL & STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
MERCK
INVENTING FOR LIFE
NW2 BCR HUB
CIVIL RECORD PLAN
C0.21