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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 19, 2025

SUBJECT: Tentative Sketch Plan Review - BT Ambler, LLC – Mixed-Use Development (MCPC #25-0175-001)

TO: Kyle Detweiler, Borough Manager

FROM: Tim Konetchy, Senior Community Planner, Montgomery County Planning Commission
Timothy.Konetchy@montgomerycountypa.gov - 610.292.4917

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We have reviewed the above-referenced tentative sketch plan, as you requested on August 26, 2025. The applicant, BT Ambler, LLC, has submitted a tentative sketch plan that provides for the redevelopment of four tax parcels under common ownership, three on the north side of S Maple Avenue (parcel #01-00-00745-00-1, #01-00-02945-00-6, and #01-00-02945-10-5) and one on the south side of S Maple Avenue (parcel #01-00-00745-00-1). The applicant proposes a total of 243 dwelling units, 5,165 square feet of commercial space, and 36,940 square feet of office space throughout two 6-story buildings. A total of 519 parking spaces are proposed throughout the development.

The proposed "north" building is proposed at six stories in height and with a 56,437-square foot footprint. The first floor of the proposed building is primarily composed of structured parking, though a portion is allocated to a residential lobby, an office lobby, a mailroom, building services, trash storage, and bicycle storage. A total of 118 parking spaces are proposed on the first floor. A subgrade level of structured parking is also proposed, which would include 153 parking spaces and which is accessible via an internal ramp from the first floor. Structured parking is also proposed throughout much of the second floor, which also includes a 19,556-square foot office space. An additional 15,285 square feet of office space is proposed on the third floor, with the balance of the floor area being dedicated to multifamily residential use. Multifamily residential dwellings are proposed throughout floors four through six.

The proposed "south" building is proposed at six stories in height and with a 49,648-square foot footprint. The first floor includes 5,185 square feet of retail space, a residential lobby, a building services area and trash room, as well as 98 parking spaces. The second story of the building is also proposed for structured parking, with a total of 99 parking spaces provided. Multifamily residential dwellings are proposed throughout floors three through six.

The applicant has also submitted a package of proposed amendments to the Redevelopment Overlay District to address several inconsistencies between the existing regulations and the submitted sketch plan; the borough has not indicated if this proposal will be considered.

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) has reviewed the sketch plan and we present the following comments to serve as preliminary feedback based on the contents of that plan and the supporting documents provided alongside it. We encourage the applicant to consider the following comments as the land development process progresses as we believe that they will lead to an improved preliminary plan which better

achieves the borough's vision for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Please note that these comments are preliminary and are subject to change upon the submission of a preliminary plan. Our comments are as follows:

**REQUESTED/PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS**

The applicant has included a list of proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance to address inconsistencies between their proposed development plan and the existing regulations. It should be noted that the amended regulations for the Redevelopment Overlay were adopted by the borough on September 17, 2024 as Ordinance Number 1140. It is also important to note that any amendment to the zoning ordinance will affect all properties within the Redevelopment Overlay and, due to this, should be considered with a mind for future proposals throughout this area. It is the borough's prerogative to determine if the proposed amendments are considered for adoption; however, we offer the following comments to aid in this review. Please note that each comment corresponds to the numbering included in the draft resolution included in the submission package provided to MCPC. Our comments are as follows:

1. Section 27-202, Regarding the Definition of "Lot." We have no concerns with this requested amendment.

2. Section 27-202, Regarding the Definition of "Lot Line." Although we have no concerns with the intent of the proposed amendment, the term "comprehensive plan" is utilized, which may cause confusion given that the term also refers to the borough's long-range land use plan. Instead, a similar term such as "unified development plan" may be more appropriate.

3. Section 27-1604.2(A), Regarding Floor Area Ratio for a Primary Use. We have no concerns with this requested amendment.

4. Section 27-1604.8., Regarding Ground-Level Structured Parking. We cannot support the requested ordinance amendment to permit up to 90% of the ground-level façade area to be occupied by structured parking. The recently adopted ordinance amendments (Ordinance Number 1140) demonstrate the borough's desire that active uses be provided along the sidewalk within a TOD. The borough and applicant are encouraged to discuss if a lesser portion of the street-facing portion of the ground-level may be occupied by structured parking. Further, it may be appropriate to establish different requirements for building fronting on a primary street, such as Butler Avenue and Main Street, as opposed to secondary streets, such as South Chestnut Street.

5. Section 27-2703. We have no concerns with this requested amendment.

6. Section 27-2703.A. We have no concerns with this requested amendment.

7. Section 27-2703.E.(3)(b)(2). The borough should consider if the proposed increase to the permissible residential density is appropriate for development within the Redevelopment Overlay District. That said, MCPC is generally in favor of increased residential density surrounding transit hubs such as Ambler Station. The requested increase in maximum building height, discussed under comment #11 below, is correlated to the requested increase in residential density as allowing additional floor area would create opportunities for additional residential density.

8. Section 27-2703.E.(3)(e), Regarding Ground-Level Structured Parking. If the borough is in favor of allowing a greater portion of the ground-level façade area to be occupied by structured parking, we are in favor of the concept of requiring that such façades be "consistent with the overall building aesthetic." However, additional detail/guidance may be appropriate to ensure the intent of this proposed language is met. Please also refer to our comments under #4, above.

9. Section 27-2703.E.(4)(b)(2). We have no concerns with this requested amendment.

10. Section 27-2703.E.(4)(b)(4). Although we are generally in favor of this requested amendment, additional standards related to the operations and maintenance of a green roof should be prepared to support the long-term viability of any green roof installed under this proposed provision.

11. Section 27-2703.E.(4)(b)(8). The borough should consider if the proposed increase to the permissible maximum height is appropriate for development within the Redevelopment Overlay District. Through the recent ordinance amendments (Ordinance Number 1140), the borough established a maximum permissible building height of 65 feet. It is worth noting that the existing maximum of 65 feet is already the highest allowance for any zoning district in the borough.

12. Section 27-2703.E.(4)(c)(4)(a). We cannot support this requested ordinance amendment. The recently adopted ordinance amendments (Ordinance Number 1140) established this requirement, which would create a traditional storefront appearance along the sidewalk in a TOD, and it is clearly intended to support the intent for a TOD as "an accessible pedestrian environment" that "promote[s] a pedestrian orientation of buildings and streets," (Section 2703-E(1)(f)).

13. Section 27-2704. Please refer to comment #7, above.

**COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 2703.E.**

1. The applicant has not provided enough information to discern compliance with the use regulations for a transit-oriented development, pursuant to Section 2703.E. The ultimate site layout may need to be altered in order to comply with this section and, should the applicant proceed with a preliminary plan, additional detail should be provided by the applicant.

2. A primary example of a requirement under Section 2703.E that could alter the ultimate site layout is the required public gathering space associated with a TOD. These gathering spaces must be "integral to the development and designed as a focal point for the transit-oriented development" pursuant to Section 2703.E.(4)(f)1. The borough should consider if the proposed location and design meets this requirement, considering that the proposed location is on a secondary street frontage. Furthermore, the conceptual site plan lacks adequate detail to confirm if the minimum requirements for a gathering space pursuant to the ordinance are met. As proposed, it appears to be a winding sidewalk within a 20-foot front setback area. Without details on proposed furnishings, as required by Section 2703.E.(4)(f)5, and proposed landscaping, as required by Section 2703.E.(4)(f)6 and 2703.E.(4)(f)9, the borough is unable to ensure that the design is compliant with the requirements for such. Should the applicant proceed with a preliminary plan, the borough should consider requesting addition detail for this area – such as the landscaping plan, streetscaping design, and proposed street furnishings – to ensure that the design can meet the minimum requirements of the ordinance before further site planning is undertaken.

**PROPOSED DRIVEWAY ON BUTLER AVENUE**

The proposed driveway on Butler Avenue appears to be located in close proximity to an existing curb cut and driveway on the neighboring property immediately to the south. Disruptions to the sidewalk created by numerous driveways can pose a safety risk to pedestrians, as there are additional potential points of vehicle-pedestrian conflict. Furthermore, Butler Avenue sees the most daily vehicular trips of the roadways upon which the development site fronts, and adding an additional driveway could potentially disrupt the flow of traffic in an area that is already prone to congestion. It is therefore recommended that the proposed driveway on Butler

Avenue be relocated to take access from Maple Avenue, Wissahickon Avenue, or Chestnut Street, where less vehicular and pedestrian traffic is anticipated. It is understood that access to the commercial space is likely the rationale behind the proposed location and, as such, it may be appropriate to provide an on-street loading area on Maple Street that is accessible to both of the proposed buildings.

c: Michael Markman, Applicant
Peter Clelland, Applicant
Glenn Kucher, Code Officer
John Oswald, Chair, Borough Planning Commission
Al Comly, Vice Chair, Borough Planning Commission
Carol DiPietro, Secretary, Borough Planning Commission
Jessica Buck, District Manager, MCCD

Attachments: A. Aerial Image of Site
B. Applicant's Submitted Site Plan



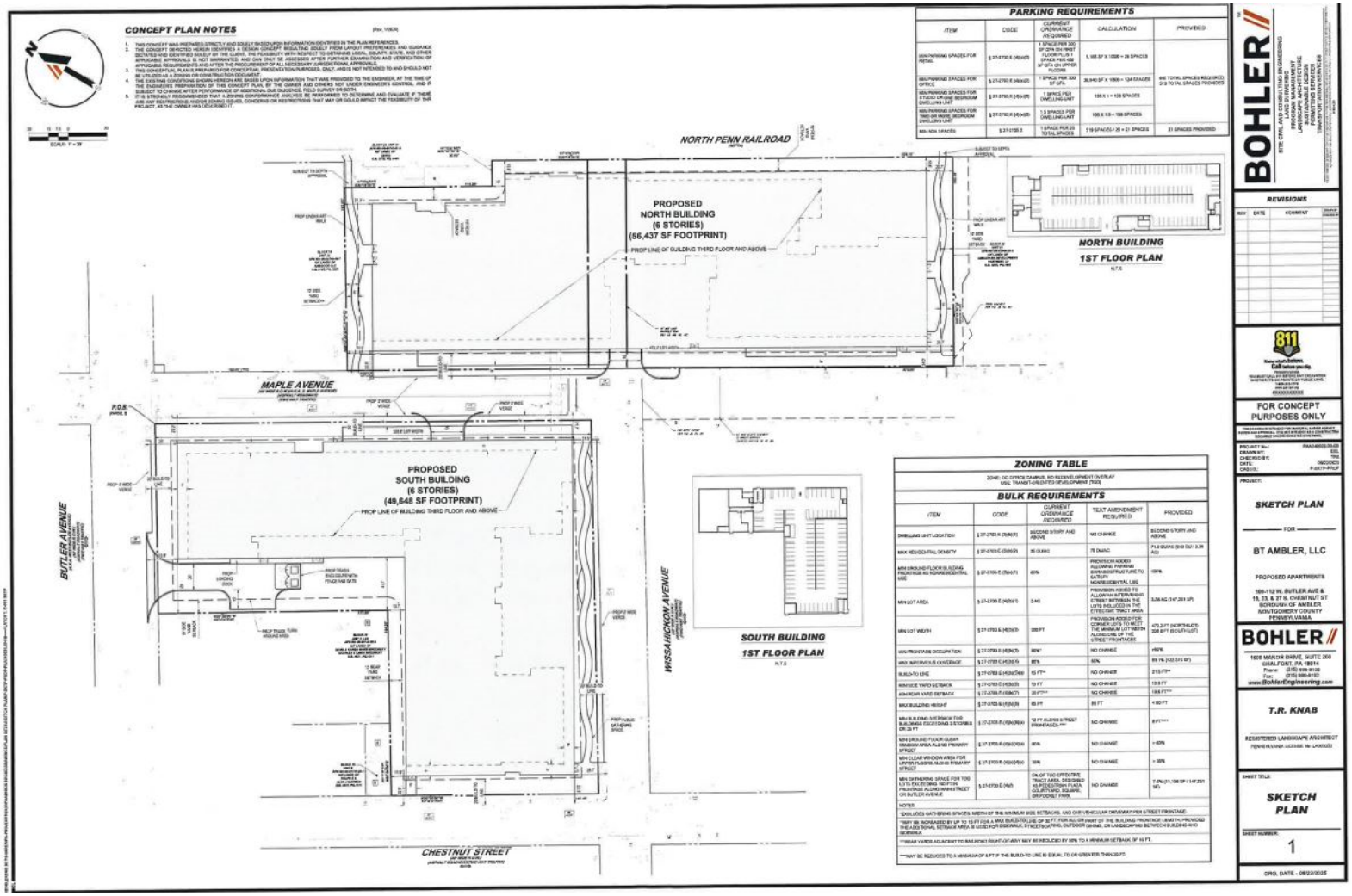

BT Ambler LLC - Mixed Use Development
MCPC#250175001

Montgomery County Planning Commission

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Aerial photography provided by Nearmap


CONCEPT PLAN NOTES
PARKING REQUIREMENTS
NORTH PENN RAILROAD
PROPOSED NORTH BUILDING (6 STORIES) (56,437 SF FOOTPRINT)
PROP LINE OF BUILDING THIRD FLOOR AND ABOVE
NORTH BUILDING 1ST FLOOR PLAN
MAPLE AVENUE
PROPOSED SOUTH BUILDING (6 STORIES) (49,648 SF FOOTPRINT)
BUTLER AVENUE
WISSAHICKON AVENUE
SOUTH BUILDING 1ST FLOOR PLAN
CHESTNUT STREET
ZONING TABLE
BULK REQUIREMENTS
BOHLER
REVISIONS
FOR CONCEPT PURPOSES ONLY
SKETCH PLAN
BT AMBLER, LLC
PROPOSED APARTMENTS
100-112 W. BUTLER AVE & 15, 23, & 27 S. CHESTNUT ST
BOROUGH OF AMBLER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA
T.R. KNAB
SKETCH PLAN
1