

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

BUILDING & PLANNING COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2025
6:00 PM (Approximately)

Chairperson: Joshua Grimes

Vice Chairperson: Sean Whalen, Jeremiah Woodring

AGENDA

1. RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZATION OF APPOINTMENT TO THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2. AMENDMENT PLAN - 121 E. City Avenue (Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center), Bala Cynwyd, Ward 9, LD# 3878A
3. RESOLUTION - CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION - 330 Spring Mill Road & 1829 County Line Road, Natural Lands Trust, Villanova, Ward 6, CU# 3931C
4. PRELIMINARY LOT LINE CHANGE - 330 Spring Mill Road & 1829 County Line Road, 1835 County Line Road, 1800 West Montgomery Avenue, (Natural Lands Trust), Villanova, Ward 6, LD# 3932LLC
5. TENTATIVE SKETCH PLAN - 330 Spring Mill Road & 1829 County Line Road, 1835 County Line Road, 1800 West Montgomery Avenue, (Natural Lands Trust), Villanova, Ward 6, LD# 3933TS
6. APPROVAL OF CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Building & Planning

ITEM: **RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZATION OF APPOINTMENT TO THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners adoption of a Resolution to appoint Liza Bresson, Chris Holloway and Dave Yeager to the Board of Directors of the Ardmore Initiative for a term that expires January 7, 2030.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Resolution - AI Board Appointments](#)

[Issue Briefing - AI Board Appointments](#)

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**RESOLUTION APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE
FOR TERMS EXPIRING JANUARY 2030**

WHEREAS, vacancies currently exist on the Board of Directors of the Ardmore Initiative, and

WHEREAS, the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, as amended, of the Ardmore Initiative provide that a member of the Board of Directors be appointed by the governing body of the Township of Lower Merion through a resolution of the Board of Commissioners.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Lower Merion that the following individuals are hereby appointed to the Board of Directors of the Ardmore Initiative to serve the term(s) indicated:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Term Commences</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Liza Bresson	November 18, 2025	January 7, 2030
Chris Holloway	November 18, 2025	January 7, 2030
Dave Yeager	November 18, 2025	January 7, 2030

ENACTED by the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Lower Merion the
_____ day of _____, 2025.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

By: _____
Todd M. Sinai, President

ATTEST:

Jody L. Kelley, Secretary

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Building & Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Consider for approval adoption of a resolution to appoint Liza Bresson, Chris Holloway and Dave Yeager to the Board of Directors of the Ardmore Initiative Municipal Business District Authority

Prepared by: Charles Doyle, Assistant Director, Building and Planning Department

Date: November 7, 2025

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Adopt a resolution to appoint Liza Bresson, Chris Holloway and Dave Yeager to the Board of Directors of the Ardmore Initiative for a five-year term.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

The Articles of Incorporation of the Ardmore Initiative state that the Board of Directors must be appointed by the governing body of the Township of Lower Merion through a resolution of the Board of Commissioners.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

The Board of Commissioners has generally approved nominations presented by the Ardmore Initiative in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

The Ardmore Initiative Board supports the nomination. The five-year terms would begin following approval and expire on January 7th, 2030. Brief biographical information on the appointees are attached to this agenda item.

V. Impact on Township Finances:

There is no impact on Township finances.

VI. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution.

Ardmore Initiative Board of Directors Appointments

Liza Bresson

Liza is the Owner, Founder, and Managing Principal of Franklin Penn Real Estate, which recently completed the acquisition of 16 E Lancaster Ave and Plaza 16 in Downtown Ardmore. Prior to that, she spent 10 years as the Vice President of Operations at WRDC, focusing on redevelopment and revitalization of retail complexes across the region. She has 20 years of experience attracting tenants, revitalizing commercial properties, and managing over 2 million square feet of commercial space. Since her acquisition of the properties earlier this year, Liza has become an active member of the Ardmore community, attending events, speaking at public input sessions, and advocating for a strong, cohesive retail mix

Chris Holloway

Chris is the owner and operator of Cork and Candle in Ardmore. Opened in November of 2024, Cork and Candle provides guests with engaging and entertaining experiences creating their own candles. Offering a scent library of over 60 unique fragrances, guests have the opportunity to spend date nights, corporate retreats, and birthday parties in their comfortable, inviting space. Prior to opening the business, Chris spent 30 years in the mortgage banking industry. Over his first year of operation, he has quickly ingratiated himself into the community, participating in First Fridays and holding special events.

Dave Yeager

Dave is the CEO and Managing Partner of Radnor Property Group. Dave holds a BFA in Landscape Architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design and a Master's in Urban Design & Planning from Harvard University. He has over 40 years of experience, has undertaken over \$5 billion in acquisitions and development, and managed more than 10 million square feet of real estate. He is currently serving as the project manager and official representative of the Piazza Group's new development project in Downtown Ardmore. Dave has been working extensively in this capacity with Lower Merion township and Ardmore Initiative to finalize plans and gather community input.



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Building & Planning

ITEM: **AMENDMENT PLAN - 121 E. CITY AVENUE (BALA CYNWYD SHOPPING CENTER), BALA CYNWYD, WARD 9, LD# 3878A**

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners approval of an Amendment Plan. The Plan, originally dated August 21, 2021 and last revised October 17, 2025, shows the construction of a 2,584 SF commercial pad-site addition and covered patio with related site improvements including a reconfigured public amenity space for the previously approved multi-family mixed-use project.

On November 3, 2025, the Planning Commission recommended approval subject to the conditions shown on the following pages.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ATTACHMENT(S):

[121 E City - Conditions of Approval](#)
[121 E City - Staff Memo](#)
[121 E City - TE Review](#)
[121 E City - MCPC Review](#)
[121 E City - Slides](#)

LD#3878A – 121 E. CITY AVENUE, BALA CYNWYD
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PLANNING COMMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2025

Land Development #: 3878A
Address and Ward: 121 E. City Avenue (Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center), Bala Cynwyd, Ward 9
Expiration Date: N/A
Zoning District: CAD-BCR
Applicant and Owner: Federal Realty

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners approval of an Amendment Preliminary Land Development Plan for the above referenced address. The Amendment Plan, originally dated August 21, 2021 and last revised October 17, 2025, shows the construction of a 2,584 SF commercial pad-site addition and covered patio with related site improvements including a reconfigured public amenity space for the previously approved multi-family mixed-use project.

On November 3, 2025, the Planning Commission recommended approval subject to the following conditions:

Township Engineer's Review

1. The Township Engineer's review letter dated October 27, 2025, shall be incorporated by reference into these conditions of approval to the extent the same is not inconsistent with these conditions of approval.

Conditional Use and Previously Approved Plan

2. The previously approved Conditions of Approval for conditional use approval #3878C shall be listed on the Final Plan, and shall remain applicable, except if/as modified by the approved Amended Plan and related conditions of approval.
3. The previously approved Conditions of Approval for Land Development #3878PP shall be listed on the Final Plan and shall remain applicable, except if/as modified by the approved Amended Plan and related conditions of approval.

Circulation

4. The applicant shall consider prohibiting left-hand turns onto Belmont Avenue and directing drivers to the St. Asaphs Road/Clwyd Road driveway to exit the site towards Belmont Avenue, as recommended by the Township Safety Unit.
5. The Amended Plan shall show the intersection improvements to be installed when warranted by PennDOT where the drive aisle intersects St. Asaphs Road at Clwyd Road.
6. Sight distance triangles shall be shown for all intersections to be modified by the Amended Plan. Final drive configuration for the drive(s) to be modified by the Amended Plan shall be subject to review by the Traffic Safety Unit, subject to PennDOT approval for state roads.

LD#3878A – 121 E. CITY AVENUE, BALA CYNWYD
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PLANNING COMMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2025

Bicycle Parking

7. The bicycle parking chart calculation as per §155 Table 8.7.1 shall be revised to include the proposed additional commercial square footage. Plans shall be revised to include the required number of bicycle parking spaces.
8. A bike rack shall be located on the pad site in the vicinity of the proposed building addition's primary entrance. The applicant shall work with the Township on the final placement and specification of bike racks.
9. The applicant shall consider incorporating a bike share station on the property. If a bike share station is installed, the applicant shall work with the Township and the Township's bike share partner to determine a suitable location.

Architectural

10. The applicant shall work with the Township on the proposed future graphic on the east elevation of the pad-site addition.
11. Architectural elevations for the proposed building addition shall be revised to show the building structure height rather than the parapet height per applicable Code provisions and shall note that the proposed building height is the continuation of the existing non-conformity.
12. Architectural elevations and renderings of all sides of the proposed building addition shall be submitted with the Final Plan, including the proposed materials. The applicant shall provide a chart to demonstrate compliance with the Architectural Design Standards in Zoning Code Section 155-6.6.I and 155-3.9.
13. The proposed building addition shall be constructed substantially as shown on the architectural elevations prepared by BCT Design Group, dated August 22, 2025, with the exception of any de minimis changes, including those mutually agreed to with staff.
14. HVAC and mechanical equipment for the building addition shall be screened on all sides per applicable Code requirements. If located on the roof, the screening shall be integrated into the architecture of the building to improve the appearance and mitigate noise per applicable Code requirements.

Landscape Plan

15. The Applicant shall work with staff and the City Avenue District to design and install Wayfinding signage and Entry Plaque Signage to support the public amenity space and connections to public trails. Wayfinding signage shall show the location of the proposed public amenity space in relation to nearby Township trails and public gathering spaces, the City Avenue District, Cynwyd Trail and Pencoyd Landing trail networks, and include residential and commercial landmarks, bike share/transit infrastructure and locations accessible to the open space/trail network. At least two

LD#3878A – 121 E. CITY AVENUE, BALA CYNWYD
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PLANNING COMMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2025

- (2) signs shall be installed; one sign in the vicinity of the larger public amenity space and near the St. Asaphs path and one sign in the vicinity of the smaller parklet on the pad-site.
16. The landscape plan shall show the proposed manhole location in the vicinity of the building addition that is consistent with Sheet C-501 of the civil plans and additional plantings shall be included where the manhole is currently shown.
 17. The plant schedule on Sheet L3.06 shall be revised to show all the proposed perennials in the perennials section rather than in the deciduous shrubs section.
 18. Plans shall show additional street trees as needed to result in one (1) tree every 30' on center along Belmont Avenue and along City Avenue from Belmont Avenue to the western edge of the building addition as needed to fill any gaps between existing street trees. The applicant shall work with the Township on tree placement and species selection.
 19. A revised landscape plan complying with the natural features code requirements of §101, the plant material and planting specification requirements of §135 and conditions herein shall be prepared and sealed by a Registered Landscape Architect and submitted with the Final Plan and shall include compliance charts demonstrating compliance with each code section.
 20. An updated maintenance and operations plan shall be submitted for all proposed or modified by the Amended Plan landscaping, street trees, street furniture and other amenities installed along the street frontages. The maintenance plan shall include the requirement to evaluate the street trees and St. Asaphs buffer plantings a minimum of every five (5) years. As necessary, the St. Asaphs Road buffer plantings shall be supplemented on an ongoing basis to ensure adequate screening given tree and vegetation growth and any gaps that may present over time.
 21. Landscape, public amenity space and street tree improvements shall be perpetually maintained in a healthy and/or sound condition in compliance with Natural Features §101-11 and shall include litter control, lighting and adherence to required lighting levels, and the care and replacement of furnishings and vegetation. The applicant shall record a covenant on the property in a form acceptable to the Township Solicitor to guarantee this requirement. A draft covenant shall be submitted with the Final Plan.
 22. The applicant shall coordinate with the Township on the final design and location of all of the following proposed or modified by the Amended Plan: amenities, street furniture including benches, trash and recycling receptacles, tree grates and bicycle racks. Product specifications for all site amenities proposed or modified by the Amended Plan shall be provided with the Final Plan. Any changes made prior to construction shall be subject to staff approval.
 23. Sightlines for intersections to be modified by the Amended Plan shall be shown on the landscape plan. Trees shall not be planted within sight lines for intersections to be modified by the Amended Plan and any plantings within those sight lines shall be 18" maximum height.
 24. The applicant shall work with staff to provide locally adaptive native species in the revised planting plan where determined feasible.

LD#3878A – 121 E. CITY AVENUE, BALA CYNWYD
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PLANNING COMMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2025

25. Plans and compliance charts shall demonstrate compliance with the buffer and screening requirements in effect at the time of application for revised dumpster and loading areas. Screen details, specifications and elevations shall be provided. Any shrubs used for screening shall be evergreen.

Utilities and Sewer

26. The location of the sanitary sewer line and associated easement shall be confirmed. The exact location shall be surveyed. Plans shall show the main as surveyed with the sanitary easement that extends 15' from the main's center line.
27. The developer shall take dedication of the portion of the Township's sanitary sewer main that extends between the proposed manhole #C60 (as shown on Sheet 501) and the sewer line terminus as determined by the survey referenced in Condition of Approval #26, and subject to review by Public Works. Relevant manhole numbers shall be shown on the plan.
28. The plans appear to show reconfiguration of the sewer main; any reconfiguration shall be subject to review and approval by the Township Engineer and Public Works Department.
29. The Public Works Department shall have the opportunity to review any final intersection configurations that result from the construction of this project.

Lighting

30. Additional pedestrian-scale lighting such as bollard lighting shall be added to the proposed larger public amenity space as needed to create a safe and welcoming pedestrian environment, particularly where a grade change and/or steps are shown. The applicant shall work with the Township on the final lighting configuration for the public amenity spaces.
31. An outdoor lighting plan for the Amended Plan, sealed by a responsible design professional that adheres to Code Chapter 105 and includes illuminance patterns shall be submitted to and approved by the Director of the Building and Planning Department prior to issuance of any permits. The location, luminaire type, wattage, means of control and pole height shall be indicated. Lighting added or modified by the Amended Plan shall be designed to minimize the off-site transmission of light, to shield the source of illumination and to prevent glare on adjacent properties. Exterior luminaires for the lighting added or modified by the Amended Plan shall be full cut-off unless it can be demonstrated that cut-off luminaires are more appropriate and will result in less off-site light trespass.
32. The lighting plan for the Amended Plan shall demonstrate compliance with applicable provisions of the IECC or the ANSI/ASHRAE/IES Standard 90.1 that is in effect at the time of the application.

LD#3878A – 121 E. CITY AVENUE, BALA CYNWYD
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PLANNING COMMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2025

Standard Conditions of Approval

33. Any changes to the approved Amended Plan shall require the submission of an as-built plan prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. Building and Planning staff can waive this requirement if the changes are determined to be insignificant.
34. A copy of the revised Amended Plan shall be submitted with any changes highlighted with the Final Plan. A letter shall also be provided with the revised Amended Plan indicating how each applicable condition of approval or revision has been addressed in the re-submission.
35. The Final Plan, complying with all applicable conditions of approval, shall be filed with the Department of Building and Planning within twelve (12) months from the date of the Preliminary Plan approval by the Board of Commissioners.
36. All signage for the Amended Plan shall be subject to a separate review for compliance with the Zoning Code by the Zoning Officer.
37. The owner shall make payment of fees and expenses of the Township's professional consultants who perform services on behalf of the Township with respect to the Amended Plan and the work contemplated thereunder and will establish and maintain with the Township those escrows for the payment of such fees required by Township Code. Owner agrees that any statement from the Township for such fees which remain unpaid for a period of 30 days may be recorded against the property as a municipal lien.
38. The owner shall make payment of the Township Engineer's inspection fees within 30 days of presentation. A penalty of 1.5% per month will be due for late payments from the date of presentation. If any shares are not paid within 60 days of presentation, the Township may elect to suspend any outstanding permits until all pending charges are settled.
39. The property owner(s) shall comply with all applicable federal, state, county, local and Lower Merion Township ordinances and laws regardless of specific mention herein.

STAFF REPORT

Date: November 12, 2025
To: Building & Planning Committee
From: Sarah Carley, Planner, Department of Building and Planning
Subject: **Amendment Preliminary Land Development Plan, Application #3878A**
121 E. City Avenue, Bala Cynwyd, Ward 9

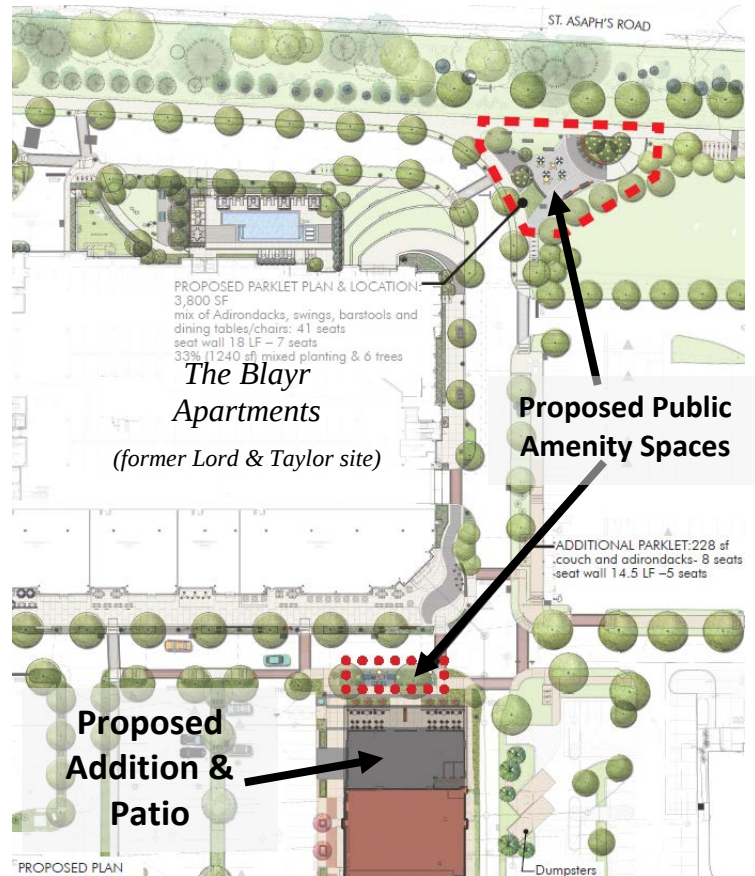
PROPOSAL

Federal Realty (Owner and Applicant) is seeking to amend the previously approved Preliminary Land Development Plan approval for the multi-family development at 121 E. City Avenue (Property.) The proposed amendment plan includes the:

- Construction of a 2,584 SF commercial pad-site addition with a 1,212 SF covered patio;
- Reconfigured public amenity space; and
- Related site improvements.

Materials submitted and reviewed with the Amended Preliminary Plan (Amended Plan) application include:

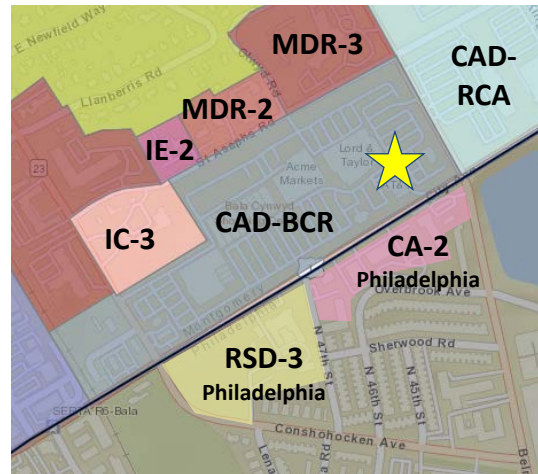
- Civil plans (20 sheets) prepared by Bohler Engineering dated June 4, 2021 and last revised October 17, 2025;
- Architectural elevation plans (2 sheets) prepared by BCT Design Group dated August 22, 2025; and
- Landscape plans (29 sheets) prepared by Studio 39 dated May 3, 2021, last revised September 29, 2025.



ZONING

The Property is zoned City Avenue District – Bala Cynwyd Retail (CAD-BCR) [§155-6.7](#). Adjacent properties along City Avenue are zoned CAD-BCR, CAD-RCA, Medium Density Residential (MDR-2, MDR-3) and Institutional (IE-2, IC-3.) The Philadelphia side of City Avenue is zoned Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential (CA-2 and RSD-3.)

City Avenue District (CAD) Zoning – Adopted in 2012, CAD-BCR is one of three zoning districts in the City Avenue District and is comprised primarily of auto-oriented shopping center properties. The overall intent of the City Avenue District zoning is to encourage higher density, multiple use, pedestrian-oriented development and the more economically productive use of land. The other CAD zoning areas are the Regional Center Area (RCA) and Bala Village district (BV).



PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Property is situated on the eastern portion of the almost 20-acre parcel owned by Federal Realty between City Avenue and St. Asaphs Road at Belmont Avenue. Developed as a shopping center in the 1950s, current uses are retail, commercial and residential and improvements include six single-story retail buildings, one 2-story commercial building, and one 6-story, 87-unit apartment building (The Delwyn). A 6-story retail/multifamily structure (The Blayr) is currently under construction.

Adjacent uses are commercial and institutional (Church of St. Asaph) to the west, residential apartments (Sutton Terrace) to the north, a commercial office complex (Karr Barth) to the east, and a variety of commercial uses to the south along the Philadelphia border.



LAND DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The Applicant received approval for the following land development applications on the Property in the past 15 years:

Application	Land Development Number	Year Approved	Description
Pad Site			
Tentative Sketch	3636-B-TS	2009	Construction of a 4,300 SF bank and a 10,000 SF retail/restaurant building.
Preliminary Plan	3636PP	2010	Construction of a 4,025 SF bank and 9,000 SF retail/restaurant building
The Delwyn			
Conditional Use	3756C	2016	To retain existing sidewalk and pedestrianway related to construction of 87-unit building.
Tentative Sketch	3756TS	2016	Construction of a 6-story 87-unit apartment building with surface parking.
Preliminary Plan	3756PP	2018	Construction of a 6-story 87-unit apartment building with surface parking.
The Blayr (formerly known as Delwyn II/Lord & Taylor site)			
Conditional Use	3878C	2021	To exceed the maximum lot width and to deviate from multipurpose and building standards.
Tentative Sketch	3878TS	2021	Demolition of the Lord & Taylor building and construction of a 6-story 230-unit mixed-use building with 9,600 SF ground floor retail and 257 structured parking spaces.
Preliminary Plan	3878PP	2021	Demolition of the Lord & Taylor building and construction of a 6-story 220-unit mixed-use building with 15,547 SF ground floor retail and 240 structured parking spaces.

PREVIOUSLY APPROVED (LD #3878PP)

The proposed Amended Plan requests to amend the preliminary plan (LD #3878PP) approved in 2021 which included the:

- Demolition of the Lord & Taylor building;
- Construction of a 6-story mixed-use building with 15,547 SF of retail, 220 residential units, and 240 parking spaces in structured parking;
- Installation of internal drives, streetscape improvements and a public amenity area.

This project is now under construction and will be called The Blayr.



Approved land development #3878PP included a concept master plan to build out the eastern portion of the site.

As part of the approved Preliminary Plan, the Applicant included a master plan for the eastern portion of the Property showing a build-out of the site with two additional mixed-use structures shown on concept plans as Block 1 and Block 2 and several public gathering spaces. Block 1 and Block 2 improvements will require future land development review and approval.

In conjunction with preliminary plan, the Applicant received conditional use approval on February 17, 2021 for Application #3878C to:

- Exceed the maximum permitted lot width;
- Deviate from the multipurpose path standards and pedestrianway standards; and
- Deviate from the building configuration standards to not provide a building step-back.

CODE STANDARDS

The proposed Amended Plan is subject to the same code provisions as the previously approved preliminary plan (LD #3878) which were the pre-2022 Subdivision and Land Ordinance Chapter 135 and the current CAD-BCR Zoning Chapter 155 standards.

Existing non-conformities exist for the impervious surface calculation and pad-site building height. Additional bicycle parking is needed to meet the code requirement.

Standard §155-6.7	Required	Previously Approved	Proposed Amended
Impervious surface	70% maximum	82.4% (ENC)	82.4% (ENC)
Floor area ratio (FAR)	0.7 max	0.6	0.6
Building Height	2 stories or 28' min	20.5	20.5 (ENC)
Use:			
Residential	No one use shall exceed 80%	339,873 SF (68%)	339,873 SF (67%)
Retail		130,366 SF (26%)	114,366 SF (23%)
Restaurant		30,989 SF (6%)	48,989 SF (10%)
Vehicle Parking	As per §155 Table 8.1.1 and Table 8.2.1	1,051 - Required 1,123 - Approved	1,084 - Required 1,084 - Proposed
Bicycle Parking	As per §155 Table 8.7.1 229 spaces	182	229 - Required 182 - Proposed UNDER
(ENC) Existing Non-Conformity			

PUBLIC AMENITY SPACE

The City Avenue District Official Map demonstrates the Township's intent to locate a public gathering space at the Property to further the goal of transforming the district from auto- to pedestrian-oriented uses. The public gathering spaces shown on the CAD Official Map are intended to be community amenities for residents, shoppers, employees and the whole Township that will be accessible from a network of pedestrianways and trails.

While density incentives utilized with the approved Preliminary Plan did not include a public gathering space, the Applicant voluntarily provided a public amenity space, or "parklet," located across from the entrance to The Blayr on the site that is now proposed for the pad-site building addition. The approved parklet included a 3,748 SF public area with decorative hardscaping, benches or chairs, seating wall (35 seats total) and landscape plantings and trees and space was reserved for the possible future construction of a small free-standing food-related retail structure.

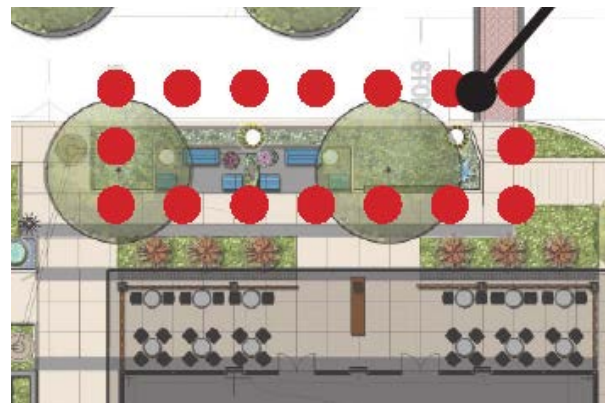
The proposed Amended Plan shows the relocation of the parklet to an area closer to the multipurpose path along St. Asaphs Road at the north end of the parking area to the east of The Blayr structure. Plans show a 3,800 SF area with hardscaping, landscaping and pergola, a variety of seating options including swinging seats and chairs (41 seats total.)

The Amended Plan also proposes a small 228 SF outdoor living area and seating wall (13 seats total) along the sidewalk immediately adjacent to the proposed building addition and outdoor patio.

Parklet details and section elevations are shown on landscape plan Sheets L2.01P, L2.02P, and L2.03P.

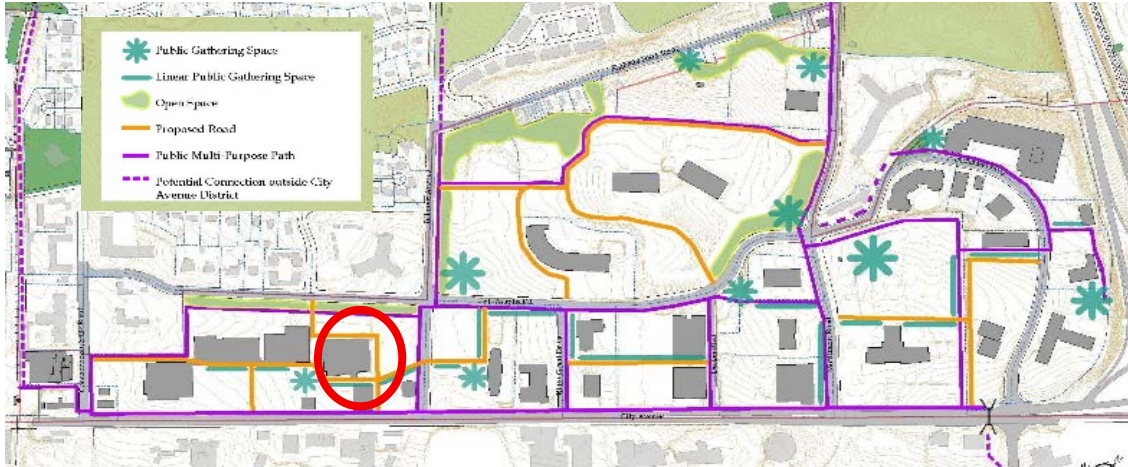


The larger of the proposed parklets is adjacent to the St. Asaphs multipurpose path.



Small parklet along West Drive and adjacent to the proposed patio/addition.

Element	Previously Approved	Proposed Amended
Public Amenity Space(s)	3,748 SF	4,028 SF total
Seats	35	54
Plantings	32% (1,201 SF)	33% (1,240 SF)
Trees	5	6
Other	Space reserved for small structure	Pergola



The City Avenue District Official Map shows the Township's vision for a network of public gathering spaces and trails.



Proposed parklet viewed from the St. Asaphs multipurpose path towards The Blayr (above) and from West Drive (below).

REVIEW PROCESS

The purpose of a Preliminary Land Development Plan is to determine the final locations and dimensions of buildings, driveways, streets, sidewalks, public gathering spaces, parking lots, landscape and street trees, and stormwater infrastructure. A Preliminary Plan must comply with the Township's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning and Subdivision Land Development Ordinance, and Official Map.

Tentative Dates for Amended Preliminary Plan Review

→	10/06/25	Planning Commission
	10/15/25	Building & Planning Committee
	10/22/25	Board of Commissioners

The Township's Land Development approval process is illustrated in the [Subdivision & Land Development Flowchart](#). This application review is currently in **Stage 4: Public Meetings**.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The City Avenue District is identified as a Regional Mixed Use Center in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, Montco2040: A Shared Vision. Regional Mixed-Use Centers are intensely developed suburban cores with significant retail, office, and residential land uses. The proposed development is generally consistent with the goal to "encourage development and transformative investment where infrastructure already exists."

The Land Use Element of the 2016 Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan identifies the City Avenue District area as a Regional Center which is the primary growth area within the Township. The proposed development is generally consistent with the goal of the Regional Center "to transform the predominant auto oriented, office-based environment into a more functionally diverse live/work/shop environment."

ADDITIONAL REVIEWS

- Lower Merion Township Engineer (attached) - The Township Engineer's October 27, 2025 review has been incorporated into the recommended conditions of approval. Conditions relate to ensuring adequate stormwater recharge and discouraging left-turns onto Belmont Avenue.
- Montgomery County Planning Commission Review (attached) - The County's October 31, 2025 review notes that the plan is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and includes recommendations related to development design standards, curb configuration in the east parking area and bicycle parking. County recommendations have been either addressed in the attached plans or have been incorporated into the recommended conditions of approval.
- Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd (NCBC) – The Applicant communicated with a representative from the NCBC about the proposed Amended Plan on October 2, 2025.

APPLICABLE STUDIES AND REPORTS

- *Potential Economic Impact of Redevelopment*, Economics Research Associates, 2007
- City Avenue Transportation Services Area Studies:
 - *Land Use Assumptions Report*, KSK Architects Planners Historians, Inc., 2010

- o *Roadway Sufficiency Analysis & Transportation Capital Improvement Plan*, McMahon Transportation Engineers & Planners, 2011
- *City Avenue District Official Map*, 2012
- *City Avenue Connectivity Plan*, Whitman, Requardt & Associates, LLP, 2014
- *City Avenue Landscape Master Plan*, SALT Design Studio, 2023
- *Commercial Retail Analysis*, MSC, 2023.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Bicycle Parking

CAD-BCR zoning requires bicycle parking as stated in §155-8.8 and Table 8.7.1. The Applicant's bicycle parking calculation shows that while 229 spaces are required, only 182 spaces are provided. It should be noted that the calculation is for the entire development, including the previously approved mixed-use development. For the additional proposed 2,584 SF commercial restaurant use, one (1) additional bicycle parking space is required (0.5 bicycle parking space per 1,000 SF of restaurant.) While only a tiny increase, the plan needs to be revised to show the total number of spaces required overall. Additionally, plans do not show a bike rack on the pad-site or near the primary entrance of the proposed addition.

Another consideration is related to the Property's location in the heart of City Avenue District and its potential suitability to be a host site for the Township's upcoming bike share program. Other anticipated bike share stations will be at Pencoyd Landing, Bala Plaza (251 St. Asaphs Road) and at the KGSB site (1 Belmont).

The addition of bicycle parking can be addressed at the Final Plan stage with the following recommended conditions of approval:

#7. The bicycle parking chart calculation as per §155 Table 8.7.1 shall be revised to include the proposed additional commercial square footage. Plans shall be revised to include the required number of bicycle parking spaces.

#8. A bike rack shall be located on the pad site in the vicinity of the proposed building addition's primary entrance. The applicant shall work with the Township on the final placement and specification of bike racks.

#9. The applicant shall consider incorporating a bike share station on the property. If a bike share station is installed, the applicant shall work with the Township and the Township's bike share partner to determine a suitable location.

2. Public Amenity Space (Parklet)

With the Property's central location in City Avenue District, the proposed public amenity spaces, particularly the larger one near St. Asaphs Road, will nicely complement the Township's pedestrian and active transportation network. Residents and shopping center employees and shoppers will be able to easily connect from the public amenity space to other multipurpose and pedestrian pathways in City Avenue District as well as further, to the Cynwyd Heritage Trail, Main Line Greenway and regional trail network. The relocated public amenity space will be better situated adjacent to the multipurpose trail

wrapping the St. Asaphs and Belmont sides of the parcel and will serve as a respite location for future pedestrian connections across St. Asaphs and Clywd Road.

To help situate parklet users and to increase the awareness of and accessibility to additional area trails and resources, staff suggests the addition of wayfinding signage such as the one pictured here and recommends the following condition of approval:

#15. The Applicant shall work with staff and the City Avenue District to design and install Wayfinding signage and Entry Plaque Signage to support the public amenity space and connections to public trails. Wayfinding signage shall show the location of the proposed public amenity space in relation to nearby Township trails and public gathering spaces, the City Avenue District, Cynwyd Trail and Pencoyd Landing trail networks, and include residential and commercial landmarks, bike share/transit infrastructure and locations accessible to the open space/trail network. At least two (2) signs shall be installed; one sign in the vicinity of the larger public amenity space and near the St. Asaphs path and one sign in the vicinity of the smaller parklet on the pad-site.



An example of the wayfinding signage currently in use in the area.

ACTION

The Planning Commission must take the following actions with respect to this application:

- A recommendation on the requested Amendment Preliminary Land Development Plan.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

On November 3, 2025 the Planning Commission voted favorably to recommend approval of the Amendment Preliminary Plan with the recommended conditions of approval.



**TOWNSHIP
OF
LOWER MERION**
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

75 E. Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, PA 19003 2376
Telephone: (610) 645-6200
www.lowermerion.org

LOWM 260.58

October 27, 2025

Christopher Leswing, Director of Building and Planning
Township of Lower Merion
75 East Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, PA 19003

**Re: 121 E. City Avenue – Bala Shopping Center
Amended Preliminary Plan Review**

Dear Mr. Leswing:

In accordance with your request for the referenced submission, we have reviewed a set of thirty-two (32) plans dated 06-04-21, last revised 10-17-25, and associated stormwater management narrative dated 08-21-25, prepared by Bohler Engineering LLC. We have also reviewed a Landscape Plan dated 05-19-22, last revised 09-29-25, prepared by Studio 39 Landscape Architecture, PC. We offer the following comments for your consideration:

A. MAJOR ENGINEERING ISSUES

- ❖ **Stormwater** – Although there is a net reduction in impervious surfaces, the runoff from the two-year storm generated by the new roof areas shall be recharged. Conveyance calculations shall be provided demonstrating that the existing storm sewer has capacity for the additional flows.
- ❖ **Traffic** – A Highway Occupancy Permit is required for the proposed improvements within the Belmont Avenue right-of-way. The design of the right-out driveway along Belmont Avenue shall incorporate increased curb radii to more effectively discourage left-turn movements.

With the resolution of the preceding major engineering issues and the remaining comments in this letter incorporated, we recommend that the Preliminary Plan be approved.

B. ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Section 121-4A(2)— Although there is a net reduction in impervious surfaces, the runoff from the two-year storm generated by the new roof areas shall be recharged. Calculations verifying adequate capacity in the existing stormwater basin to accommodate the proposed development shall be provided. Conveyance calculations shall be provided demonstrating that the existing storm sewer has capacity for the additional flows.
2. Section 135-40—A Planning Module or Exemption must be approved by the City of Philadelphia and the DEP prior to recording the Final Plan.
3. Section 135-41.1(A)—Adequate water supply must be documented for the proposed development. A letter from Aqua Pennsylvania must be submitted certifying adequate supply for the building expansion.

4. Section 135-4.9(E.2)—All proposed curb ramps including connections to the proposed amenity spaces must comply with ADA requirements. The Final Plan shall include detailed design in accordance with PennDOT standards for all proposed ramp locations
5. Section 155-6.6(N)—The project is located within the City Avenue Special Services District. A transportation impact fee is applicable to this development.
6. Section 135-4.10(B)—The modified portion of the sanitary sewer under the amenity space should be the responsibility of the property owner. The Public Works Department may consider an encroachment agreement for the easement within the remaining extent of the site.
7. Section 155-8.6— Updated turning templates shall be provided for the new parking configuration. The Zoning Officer must agree with the number and tabulation of the final parking demand schedule.

C. ENGINEERING COMMENTS

1. The Director of Building and Planning must approve the Lighting Plan.
2. A Highway Occupancy Permit is required for the proposed work in the Belmont Ave right-of-way.
3. The Traffic Safety Unit shall approve the final driveway condition on Belmont Ave.
4. Additional traffic calming measures shall be provided on South Drive to allow for safer pedestrian access through the site. The installation of a fence shall be considered to deter pedestrian traffic from crossing South Drive and guiding pedestrians to the crosswalk.
5. A Planting Plan must be approved by the Planning Department and the Township Arborist. The greening standards must be documented to be achieved in order for the amount of impervious provided on the plan to be permitted. The Landscaping Plan shall be fully coordinated with the site Utility Plan to avoid conflicts.
6. The Lighting Plan must be approved by the Building and Planning Department.
7. Additional detail is required for the proposed amenity space. Spot elevations and grading shall be provided.

A copy of the revised plan shall be submitted with any changes highlighted. A letter shall also be provided with the revised plan indicating how each requested revision has been addressed in the re-submission.

Please advise if we may be of further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph A. Mastronardo, P.E.

PENNONI ASSOCIATES

Township Engineer

cc: Colleen Hall, Senior Planner
Angela Forney, Planning Technician
Bohler Engineering LLC

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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 31, 2025

TO: Mr. Christopher Leswing, Director of Building & Planning
Building & Planning Department
Township of Lower Merion

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

SUBJECT: MCPC #18-0320-008
SOPI - 121 E City Pad Site

We have received and reviewed a “SOPI” submission for the above-referenced land development application as you requested on October 20, 2025. The comments in this memo are based on the most recent submission. We have attached our most recent full review letter (for submission MCPC #18-0320-008) for reference; however, some comments in our previous review letter(s) may have been addressed.

UPDATED BACKGROUND

We have reviewed the most recent “SOPI” submission for changes and did not identify any significant changes with regards to the type of development and location of improvements proposed. However, revisions were shown to the proposed use percentage chart, parking calculations, and parking lot configuration with this submission.

ADDITIONAL REVIEW COMMENTS

We have reviewed the most recent “SOPI” submission and feel that several comments from our October 1, 2025 review letter (please see Attachment B) may still be worthy of discussion and should be addressed as part of future submissions regarding this application.

In addition, we wish to offer the following new comment in response to the revised parking lot configuration behind the existing building labeled “Chili’s.” Previous site plans showed a curbed and landscaped parking lot island defining the edge of the row of parking spaces on the west side of the existing building labeled “Chili’s.” The revised plans show this area being a striped pavement area instead. We encourage the applicant to explore whether the curbed and landscaped parking lot island could still be used in this location in order to define the edge of the row of parking spaces and separate the parking lot traffic flow from the traffic flow on the adjacent driveway off of Belmont Avenue.

Attachment A: Reduced Copy of Applicant’s Proposed Site Plan

Attachment B: MCPC #18-0320-007 Review Letter Dated October 1, 2025

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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 1, 2025

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

Re: MCPC #18-0320-007
Plan Name: Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center
(2,584 sq. ft. commercial on approximately 19.91 acres)
Situate: City Avenue (north)/Belmont Avenue (west)
Lower Merion Township

Dear Mr. Leswing:

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 September 19, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Federal Realty, proposes to construct a 2,584-square foot building addition to an existing pad site building at the Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center with an attached covered patio area of 1,212 square feet. The trash enclosure, currently in the location of the proposed building addition, will be relocated across the south drive in a separate parking area. The previously approved plan for this site included a 3,748-square foot parklet at the intersection of West Drive and South Drive. With the proposed building addition, the parklet in this location will be reduced to 228 square feet and a new parklet totaling 3,800 square feet is shown towards the rear of the site along a pathway that connects to the intersection of Belmont Avenue and St. Asaph's Road. Additional improvements shown at this time include modifications to several parking areas and parking islands, ADA curb ramps and crosswalks. The property is located in the township's CAD-BCR City Avenue District-Bala Cynwyd Retail zoning district. An updated landscape plan was received from township staff on September 30, 2025.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The City Avenue District area of Lower Merion Township is identified as a Regional Mixed-Use Center in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*. Regional Mixed-Use Centers are intensely developed suburban cores with significant retail, office, and residential land uses. The proposed development will create additional active commercial space and create an enlarged public



gathering space, as part of the ongoing mixed-use development, which is generally consistent with the goal to “encourage development and transformative investment where infrastructure already exists.”

The Land Use Element of the 2016 Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan identifies the City Avenue District area as a Regional Center which is the primary growth area within the township. The proposed development will create additional centrally-located active commercial space and an enlarged public gathering space, as part of the ongoing mixed-use development, which will help advance the goal of the Regional Center “to transform the predominant auto-oriented, office-based environment into a more functionally diverse live/work/shop environment and a pedestrian-friendly district.”

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 moving forward. 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 Lower Merion Township Zoning Ordinance that we feel should be addressed as part of any future land development submissions associated with this proposal:

- A. Minimum Building Height. Section 155-6.7.C.(2)(a) states that “the minimum height of any building shall be two stories and no less than 28 feet above grade.” It appears that the applicant proposes a single-story building addition.
- B. Development Design Standards. Section 155-6.7.H. states that the development design standards provided in §155-6.6.I. shall also apply to the CAD-BCR District. Additional information may be helpful to determine compliance with the development design standards, as applicable. For example, §155-6.6.I.(5)(c)[5] states that “building corners at intersections of public streets shall be visually emphasized through design features [...]” The proposed building addition will be located at the intersection of two proposed roads as shown on the City Avenue Official Map. Therefore, additional information regarding the design of the building addition as viewed from both frontages may be helpful.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS

We encourage the applicant to explore incorporating electric vehicle charging infrastructure into their project. Land development is the most efficient time to add the electrical infrastructure needed to serve electric vehicle charging stations.

BICYCLE PARKING

Several bike racks are shown around the site; however, no bike racks were identified closest to the proposed building addition. We encourage the applicant to provide bike parking closer to the primary entrance of the proposed commercial building addition for the convenience of future patrons.

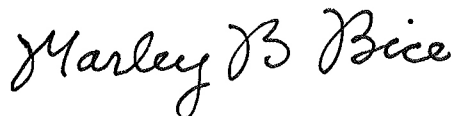
CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the proposed development; however, we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve the 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 (#18-0320-007) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



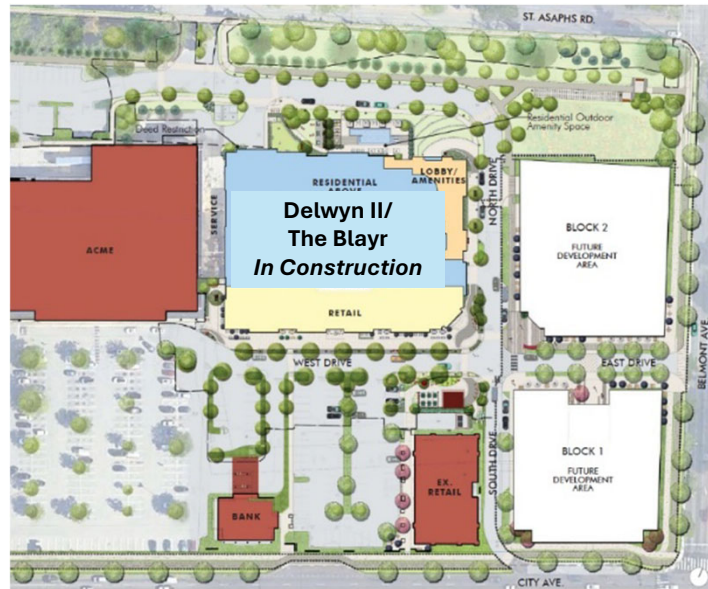
Marley Bice, AICP, Community Planning Assistant Manager
610-278-3740 – marley.bice@montgomerycountypa.gov

c: George W. Broseman, Esq., Applicant's Representative
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
Greg Prichard, Twp. Hist. Preserv. Planner
Holly Colello, Twp. Planner
Sarah Carley, Twp. Planner
Angela Forney, Twp. Planning Technician

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

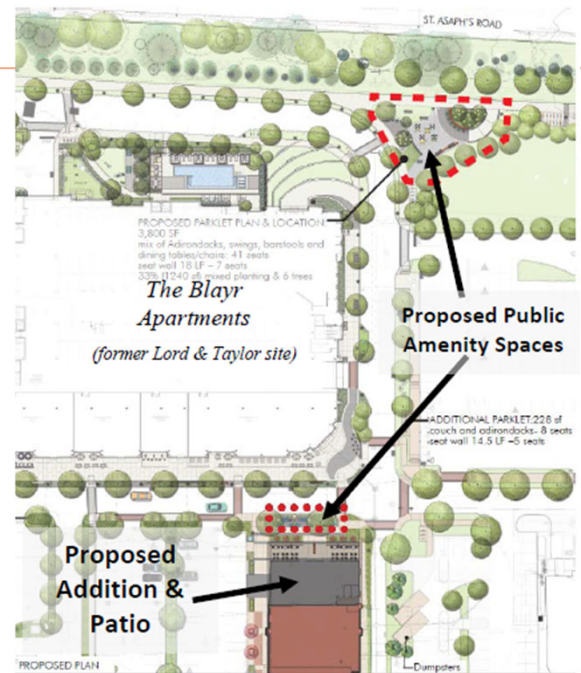
Attachment B: Aerial Image of Site

Approved Preliminary Plan (2021)



1

Proposed Amendment Preliminary Plan



2

Proposed Addition



3

Public Amenity Space



4



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Building & Planning

ITEM: **RESOLUTION - CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION - 330 SPRING MILL ROAD & 1829 COUNTY LINE ROAD, NATURAL LANDS TRUST, VILLANOVA, WARD 6, CU# 3931C**

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners adoption of a Resolution approving a Conditional Use application. The applicant seeks Conditional Use approval to modify a condition imposed by the Board of Commissioners (Appeal No. 3739C), pursuant to Code §155-4.4.C(6).

The Hearing Officer's recommendation is attached.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Natural Lands Trust - CU Hearing Officer Recommendation](#)

[Natural Lands Trust - Conditional Use - Issues Memo](#)

[Natural Lands Trust - Conditional Use Resolution](#)

Before the Conditional Use Hearing Officer
Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County
Pennsylvania

Application CU #3931C

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDINGS
OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER**

This conditional use application was filed by Natural Lands Trust seeking conditional use approval to modify conditions imposed by the Board of Commissioners (CU No. 3739C) which regulated outdoor events at the property pursuant to grant of a conditional use approval, and Code §155-4.4.C(6) and the application procedure and standards found in §155-11.1.F & G. A Conditional Use Hearing was conducted on Sept. 25, 2025, before the Conditional Use Hearing Officer.¹

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

A. Background

1. The Applicant is Natural Lands Trust, Incorporated d/b/a Natural Lands (“NLT”), c/o Oliver P. Bass (“Bass”), President and CEO, with a business address of 1031 Palmers Mill Road, Media, PA 19063.
2. NLT is represented by Denise R. Yarnoff, Esq., of the law firm Riley Riper Hollin & Colagreco.
3. The conditional use application concerns 41.72 acres of property located at 330 Spring Mill Road and 1829 County Line Road, Lower Merion Township, further identified as Parcel I.D. Nos. 40-00-56504-00-3 and 40-00-56504-01-2 and known as "Stoneleigh" (“Property”).

¹ The Conditional Use Hearing Officer is authorized to conduct the hearing pursuant to Code §155-11.1.F(9)(c).

4. NLT's ownership of the Property is evidenced by the vesting Deed of Consolidation dated 7/21/2016. Ex. A-1(d).

5. The Property is located in the IN Institutional Nature Preserve Zoning District as an Environmental (Nature Preserve) use.

6. The Property has been preserved by Natural Lands as a natural garden and conservation resource since 2015. The gardens and grounds of the historic estate are meticulously maintained by Natural Lands and open to the general public for use as a native plant preserve.

7. The Property has frontage on Spring Mill Road, County Line Road, Montgomery Avenue and Greenwood Court. *See*, Ex. A-1(e).

8. The Property is encompassed by LDR1 and LDR2 Low Density Residential Zoning Districts. It is adjacent to Villanova University to the west (across County Line Road); single family detached homes to the south (across Spring Mill Road); single family detached homes on Greenwood Court to the east, and single family detached homes to the north.

9. The Property contains a Tudor Revival mansion built between 1877 and 1881, which is listed on the Lower Merion Township Historic Resource Inventory as a Class II Historic Resource ("House").

B. Previous Conditional Use Approval

10. On March 18, 2015, the Board of Commissioners granted conditional use approval, subject to conditions, permitting use of the Property as an Estate Preservation Lot, pursuant to Code §155-110², with two complementary uses: NLT may use the Property as a native plant preserve, and the Organ Historical Society ("OHS") may use the historic resource

² Provisions of the Zoning Code in effect in 2016 which were superseded by the new Zoning Code enacted in 2020. *See* Ex. T-10, Staff Memo, p. 2.

house as its headquarters, as a repository for the book and periodical collections and the OHS archives, as a resource for scholars and a source for education about the American pipe organ. (CU No. 3739C).

11. The Board of Commissioners imposed 33 conditions on the conditional use approval of CU No. 3739C in 2015.

12. In 2020, Lower Merion Township enacted a new zoning code that created Institutional Districts.

13. Code §4.4.C permits conditions imposed by the Board of Commissioners by conditional use on institutional uses to be modified by the Board of Commissioners by conditional use pursuant to Code §155-4.4.C.6.

C. Current Conditional Use Application

14. The Applicant filed a Conditional Use Application No. 3931C on August 21, 2025, pursuant to Code §155-4.4.C(6). *See*, Ex. A-1(b), Conditional Use Application.

15. The Applicant's transmittal letter dated August 21, 2025, requests "limited amendments to the conditions of approval set forth in the Conditional Use Approval for the Property issued by the Lower Merion Township Board of Commissioners by letter dated March 19, 2015, pursuant to Section 155-4.4.C.(6) of the Zoning Code." Ex. A-1(a), Transmittal Cover Letter.

16. The Applicant seeks amendments to the following conditions of approval:

9. The applicants shall be permitted to hold up to twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot at one time, six (6) of which may include outdoor amplified music subject to Code Section 155-11.O.2.c.

10. The twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot are limited to the hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday

through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday per Code Section 155-11.O.2.c.

18. The applicants shall provide a crossing guard or an off-duty police officer to chaperone pedestrians from the Villanova train station and any nearby off-site parking locations for the 12 events authorized under Section 155-11.O.2.c, as appropriate.
20. The pedestrian gate at the intersection of Spring Mill Road and County Line Road shall be clearly marked and available for use by attendees of the 12 events authorized under Section 155-11.O.2.c, as appropriate.
23. Any lighting associated with the 12 events authorized under Section 155-11.O.2.c shall be reasonably shielded to direct light away from the perimeter of the property and shall be powered down within 30 minutes and turned off within 60 minutes of the end of each event.

17. More particularly, the Applicant seeks to remove conditions No. 9 & 10 because the current zoning ordinance regulates the number of events and duration of events. The Applicant also seeks to modify conditions No. 18, 20, and 23 to remove limiting language about "twelve (12) events" because it will provide a chaperone for pedestrians, access to the pedestrian gate and appropriate lighting for all events, as required.

18. Colleen Hall, ("Hall,") a Senior Planner at the Lower Merion Township Department of Building and Planning, reviewed NLT's conditional use application and wrote a comprehensive memo to the Planning Commission for its meeting on Sept. 8, 2025. ("Staff Memo") Ex. T-10. It describes the history of the Tudor revival mansion on the Property, known as Stoneleigh, which is listed on the Lower Merion Historic Resource Inventory as a Class II Historic Resource. The Staff Memo notes that there are several formal gardens for which Olmstead Brothers served as landscape architects from 1900 to 1913. In 2016, the Haas family donated Stoneleigh to NLT for public enjoyment and to nurture and enhance the natural beauty of the community resource.

19. Regarding NLT's requests to remove conditions of approval from the previous Condition Use, the Staff Memo states "[e]ven if these conditions were removed from the previous Conditional Use, the Environmental (Nature Preserve) zoning still includes conditions related to the number of events and duration of events. (...) Stoneleigh would be subject to these Environmental (Nature Preserve) regulations in the Zoning code." *See*, Ex. T-10, Staff Memo at 4. Staff supports approval of the conditional use application. *See*, Ex. T-10, Staff Memo at 6. Lastly, the Staff Memo directs the Planning Commission take action on a recommendation on the conditional use application. Ex. T-10 at 6.

20. On Sept. 8, 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed NLT's conditional use application and recommended approval to proceed with the requested conditional use with no additional conditions imposed. *See*, Ex. T-11, Planning Commission Recommendation to Hearing Officer. Hall stated the Planning Commission voted 4-2 for approval with no recommended conditions of approval. (NT 9/25/25 at 7)

21. It should be noted that NLT has recently submitted two proposals relating to Stoneleigh and the adjacent property known as Oakwell, located at 1835 County Line Road and 1800 Montgomery Avenue, which are not part of this conditional use application.

22. The first proposal is a lot line change to incorporate 10.3 acres of Oakwell into Stoneleigh and keep 3.3 acres of Oakwell for the Oakwell estate house, which is home to the Wyncote Foundation. Ex. T-10, Staff Memo at 5; Ex. A-4, Proposed Subdivision Plan.

23. The second proposal of the Stoneleigh expansion is to rezone Oakwell from LDR1 to IN Institutional Nature Preserve, which is consistent with the zoning for Stoneleigh. This would create a unified 52-acre parcel zoned IN Nature Preserve for Stoneleigh. The Oakwell mansion property will remain zoned LDR1. NLT submitted a petition to amend the

zoning code and zoning map to rezone the Stoneleigh expansion and amend provisions of Article V, Uses, Table 5.3, Use Regulations. The changes to the code language relate to the Environmental (Nature Preserve) section of the code. The proposed text amendments are designed to provide greater flexibility for operations to better accommodate visitors, allow more community events without an arbitrary cap, and clarify the diverse experiences and uses. These changes will be presented to the Planning Commission in the upcoming months. *See*, Ex. T-10, Staff Memo at 5.

24. On September 25, 2025, a conditional use hearing was conducted.

25. No one entered an appearance in opposition to the conditional use application, petitioned for party status, or retained counsel.

26. Colleen Hall was present on behalf of Lower Merion Township and offered exhibits marked T-1 to T-11 into the record:

T-1 Conditional Use Hearing Agenda

T-2 Affidavit of Publication of NLT dated 9/8/25;

T-3 Affidavit of Publication of NLT dated 9/15/25;

T-4 Cover Letter of Conditional Use Application dated 8/21/25;

T-5 Conditional Use Application dated 8/21/25;

T-6 Deed for Stoneleigh (Natural Lands Trust, Incorporated) dated 7/21/16;

T-7 Revised Conditions of Approval Resolution No 2015-04, dated 3/18/15;

T-8 Google Earth Map of Stoneleigh dated 8/18/2025;

T-9 Stream AGSJS Tax Map of Stoneleigh dated 7/11/25;

T-10 Staff Report by Colleen Hall, Senior Planner, to the Planning Commission, dated 9/8/25;

T-11 Planning Commission Recommendation to Hearing Officer dated 9/23/25.

The Township's exhibits were accepted into the record.

27. The Township did not present any witnesses for testimony.

28. The Applicant offered six (6) exhibits into the record:

A-1 Conditional Use Application

- a. Conditional Use Application Enclosure Letter dated 8/21/25;
- b. Conditional Use Application;
- c. Stoneleigh Tax Map;
- d. Vesting Deed for Stoneleigh;
- e. Aerial Map of Stoneleigh;
- f. Requested Revised Conditions of 2015 Conditional Use Approval

A-2 Lower Merion Zoning Code, as amended (incorporated by reference);

A-3` Affidavit of Posting of Property;

A-4 Proposed Subdivision Plan;

A-5 Tentative Sketch Plan, prepared by Site Engineering Concepts, LLC, dated 9/5/25, last revised 9/19/25;

A-6 2015 Conditional Use Decision.

The Applicant's exhibits were accepted into the record.

29. Attorney Yarnoff stated the Applicant seeks to amend certain conditions of approval of the prior conditional use associated with the Stoneleigh property. This is the beginning of a larger examination of the Property that will also involve the Oakwell property. Oakwell is an adjacent property which is under agreement of sale to NLT. If approvals are granted, approximately ten acres of Oakwell will be merged into Stoneleigh and zoned IN Institutional Nature Preserve. The remaining three acres with the Oakwell mansion house will be subdivided into a separate lot zoned residential. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 8-9)

30. The Applicant offered testimony from Oliver P. Bass ("Bass"), the President and CEO of NTL. His business address is 1031 Palmers Mill Road, Media PA 19063. Bass testified

that NLT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit conservation organization based in the Philadelphia area. It owns 40 nature preserves and Stoneleigh, which are operated for the benefit of people and nature. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 15-16)

31. Stoneleigh is a 41.72-acre property located between County Line Road, Spring Mill Road, and Montgomery Avenue in Lower Merion Township. See Ex. A-1(e), aerial photo. It currently contains a visitor parking area, a historic mansion, a pool house and patio, a carriage house, a garage, and several other outbuildings, gardens, internal pathways, and roads. NLT is under agreement of sale with the school district to purchase the Oakwell, the property located along the northern property line of Stoneleigh. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 18-19). Oakwell was originally part of the Stoneleigh property and was subdivided in the 1930s. NLT is also pursuing a lot line revision of subdivision to incorporate portions of Oakwell into Stoneleigh (N.T. 9/25/25 at 19-20) NLT seeks to merge ten acres of the Oakwell property into the Stoneleigh property and change the zoning to IN. The Oakwell Mansion will be located on three acres and owned by a private charitable foundation. It will be preserved and restored inside and out. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 21-22)

32. Bass testified that NLT is requesting modifications of certain conditions of the original conditional use approval from 2015. Those modifications are consistent with the current ordinance and part of the larger improvement of the property. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 21-22)

33. Ethan Andrew Kauffmann, the Director of Stoneleigh, was the second witness for NLT. He testified that Stoneleigh is a public garden with 42 acres that welcomes about 45,000 guests per year free of charge. It strives to improve the landscape for the betterment of the local community with native plants and sustainable practices, and to inspire others to do the same.

34. Stoneleigh and Oakwell have been separate properties for nearly a century. NLT has the opportunity to reunite them, and in doing so, improve guest amenities, increase public programming, educational programs and, perhaps, performing arts. NLT will care for the incredible mature trees, plants, and animals at Oakwell. It hopes to elevate the heritage of the site for the community. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 26-27)

35. NLT seeks amendments to five conditions related to the number of events that are permitted on the Property. Events with amplified music are limited to six (6) per year. The total number of permitted events is twelve (12) on an annual basis. NLT requests that the number twelve (12) be removed from the conditions numbered 9, 10, 18, 20, and 23 because the ordinance itself already permits twelve (12) events. The modifications would have no impact on the way Stoneleigh has been used since 2018 when it opened to the public and began hosting outdoor events with amplified music. NLT has taken steps to mitigate impacts to the neighbors. It has not received any complaints from the neighbors, and it is not aware of the Township receiving any complaints. NLT has been compliant with the existing zoning code. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 28-29). The proposed modifications requested by NLT are shown on Ex. A-1(f).

36. Kauffmann testified that conditional use approval is no longer necessary to operate the environmental nature preserve on the Property because the [zoning] code was amended in 2020. NLT's current conditional use application complies with all of the relevant requirements for the use set forth in Article V, including specific requirements set forth in Table 5.3. The proposed modifications are compliant with conditional use standards of Code §155-11.1.F(9)(f)(1-6). The proposed modifications are not applicable to 155-11-1.G(2-7) because the conditional use application is not for approval use. Conditions of the Property relating to visitor information and operations, separation requirements, traffic, loading, queuing, lighting and

landscape buffers will not change as a result of the proposed modifications. Separation requirements for residential uses do not apply to the use of Stoneleigh because it is not zoned residential. The Director of Building and Planning did not require a traffic impact study with this application, but NLT intends to submit one with some of its other pending applications and review during the approval process. The proposed modifications to the conditions will not result in any changes to the loading and queuing requirements at Stoneleigh which were part of the original conditional use approval. There will not be any changes to the conditions of approval that would impact Stoneleigh's compliance with noise, lighting and ambient sound requirements. Lastly, the proposed modification won't have any impact to the existing landscape buffer area. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 30-36)

37. Attorney Yarnoff summarized the conditions of approval that NLT would like to be modified and the rationale for each one. Condition No. 9 states that the Applicant shall be permitted to hold up to twelve (12) events per year of more than 125 people on the estate preservation lot at one time. NLT requests that condition No. 9 be removed because the current ordinance permits twelve (12) events per year. NLT further requests that language limiting the Applicant to six (6) events with amplified music per year should be removed because the current ordinance allows twelve (12) events with amplified music. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 37-38)

38. Condition No. 10 states that twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people are limited to the hours of 9:00 am to 9:00 pm Sunday through Thursday, and 9:00 am to 11:00 pm Friday and Saturday. The language of the current ordinance is the same, so the condition has become "duplicative and not necessary." (N.T. 9/25/25 at 38)

39. Condition No. 18 states the Applicant shall provide a crossing guard or an off-duty police officer to chaperone pedestrians from the Villanova train station and any nearby off-

site parking locations for the twelve (12) events authorized here. NLT would like the number twelve (12) to be removed so the condition would just say “for events.” Any event that requires a crossing guard or off-duty police officer to shepherd people across the street will be provided by NLT. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 38)

40. Condition No. 20 states that the pedestrian gate at the intersection of Spring Mill Road and County Line Road shall be clearly marked and available for use by the attendees of the twelve (12) events. NLT would like the number twelve (12) to be removed so the condition would state “available for use by attendees of the events authorized under the ordinance.” (N.T. 9/25/25 at 39)

41. Condition No. 23 provides that any lighting associated with the twelve (12) events authorized under the ordinance shall be reasonably shielded to direct light away and be turned off at certain times. NLT asks that language about twelve (12) events be removed so the condition states “any lighting associated with events will be required to comply with those requirements.” (N.T. 9/25/25 at 39)

42. NLT met with the Rosemont/Villanova Civic Association in September. Most of its questions were related to the bigger picture, specifically plans involving Oakwell, rather than modifying conditions for Stoneleigh. The civic also had questions about amending the ordinance which will be heard by the Board of Commissioners in another proceeding. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 42-43)

43. After Stoneleigh and part of Oakwell are combined, NLT will consider some master plan general improvements, which include internal pathways, a small welcome center, additional parking, and moving the Tea House so that it is more accessible and further away from the property line. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 44) *See also*, Ex. A-4, Proposed Subdivision Plan.

44. Kelly Biesecker, a resident of 1808 Montgomery Avenue, testified in support of NLT's application. She resides at Squirrel Inn, which was originally part of the Stoneleigh estate, and is its closest neighbor. NLT has kept the neighborhood and community apprised of future plans for the area. It has been open, communicative, and welcoming. She believes that preserving, restoring, and repurposing Oakwell and Acorn Cottage as an integral part of Stoneleigh and the neighborhood, environment, and community is invaluable. The loss of gardens by Olmsted would have been a terrible shame, but now to enjoy the national artistry for all generations is a gift. Biesecker supports all applications for Stoneleigh's and NLT to continue to improve the natural garden and newly reunited properties. She mentioned that John and Clara [Haas] "prioritized education, preservation, conservation, artistic endeavors, that was what they wanted to be their legacy, and they would be so very happy today." (N.T. 9/25/25 at 48)

45. Marc Hershorin, a resident of 333 State Brook Road in Villanova, stated he appreciates what NLT is doing. He concluded his comments stating he is "all in favor of it because I can walk there from my house, so any other improvements obviously are welcome." Hershorin initially had questions about how many events NLT plans to hold. Attorney Yarnoff responded that NLT is asking for the ordinance to be amended "to allow for more events and that number is 35 on the entirety of the Stoneleigh estate." (N.T. 9/25/25 at 49) Hershorin asked about the number of people attending events at Stoneleigh. Yarnoff responded that the number of attendees varies by event. Bass added that on rare occasions an even has 250 or more people. Hershorin asked about the effect on traffic for events of that size and Yarnoff responded that traffic is not related to this application but "there will be more information at future public meetings to discuss all of those issues." (N.T. 9/25/25 at 49-50)

C. Legal Authority for Use and Conditional Use Relief

46. The Lower Merion Township Board of Commissioners enacted Ordinance No. 4181 on February 26, 2020, which established the new zoning code, including the Institutional Districts.

47. The Institutional Districts is codified through §155-4.4 of the Zoning Ordinance.

48. The intent of the Institutional Districts set forth in Code §155-4.4.A states:

The intent of the institutional districts is to provide a regulatory context for institutional uses, with two main goals: to support the sustainability of institutions, and to render them compatible with the residential neighborhoods in which they may be located. These regulations recognize a diversity of institutional locations and goals, the institutional need to adapt to changing circumstances (including functions and growth,) and neighborhood desires to minimize incompatibilities (including activities and expansion).

Code §155-4.4.A.

49. There are four principal institutional districts. Institutional Nature Preserve (IN), Institutional Civic (IC), Institutional Educational (IE) and Institutional Housing (IH). These categories correspond to the variety of activities and range of impacts that might be expected of each. Code §155-4.4.B.

50. Institutional Nature Preserve (IN) is intended to collectively define sites and buildings operated for types of uses including but not limited to cemeteries, environmental and open space preserves, golf clubs, and institutional residential. Code §155-4.4.B(1)

51. The Municipalities Planning Code confers authority to municipalities to grant conditional use relief pursuant to the express standards and criteria of their applicable code:

Zoning ordinances may contain provisions for conditional uses to be allowed or denied by the governing body after recommendations by the planning agency and hearing, pursuant to express standards and criteria set forth in the zoning ordinance. (...) In allowing a conditional use, the governing body may attach such reasonable conditions and safeguards,

other than those related to off-site transportation or road improvements, in addition to those expressed in the ordinance, as it may deem necessary to implement the purposes of this act and the zoning ordinance.

Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247 of 1968) §603.c.2.

52. The Board of Commissioners shall have the power to approve or disapprove conditional uses when this chapter specifically requires obtaining such approval, pursuant to Code §155-11.1.F(1).

53. The Applicant shall have the initial burden of persuasion that the application complies with the specific requirements of the proposed use set forth in Article V, Uses, subject to §155-11.1.F(4), pursuant to §155-11.1.F(3).

54. Opponents shall have the initial duty of presenting substantial evidence that the application does not comply with the general criteria of this chapter, but the Applicant shall retain the ultimate burden of persuasion concerning those criteria, pursuant to §155-11.1.F(4).

55. The Board of Commissioners may, by conditional use, modify conditions previously imposed by the Zoning Hearing Board on the approval of institutional uses by special exception:

All previous conditions imposed by the Zoning Hearing Board on the approval of institutional uses by special exception and all imposed conditions by the Board of Commissioners by conditional use shall remain in force but may be modified by conditional use.

Code §155-4.4.C(6)

56. The Applicant proposes to modify a condition imposed by the Board of Commissioners in connection with conditional use approval granted in Application No. 3739C pursuant to Code §155-4.4.C(6).

57. Lower Merion Township Zoning Code § 155-11.1.F. *et seq.* contains general conditional use procedures. Criteria for conditional use approval is found in Code § 155-

11.1F.9(f):

Criteria for conditional use approval. The Board of Commissioners shall grant a conditional use only if it finds substantial evidence that any proposed development plan submitted comply with the following:

- (1) Meets all conditions of uses expressed in the use classification section of this chapter;
- (2) Does not conflict with the Township and County Comprehensive Plans and other plans adopted by the township;
- (3) Is consistent with the spirit, purposes and intent of the applicable zoning district;
- (4) Is in conformance with all applicable requirements of this Chapter and all municipal, state and federal codes applicable to the use or process in question;
- (5) Is suitable to the property in question. This criterion shall consider issues such as traffic, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, location and design of parking areas, adjacent land use(s) and other impacts on the surrounding area. If the proposal is adjacent to a residential district, the scale of the use shall relate to and complement the surrounding area.
- (6) Public Utilities. All uses shall be capable of being served by public sewer. A use may be permitted to be served on an on-lot sanitary system, only if deemed acceptable by the Board of Commissioners and the adopted 537 Plan of the Township, upon recommendation of the Township Engineer. Sufficient water supply must be available to accommodate the needs of the proposed use.

58. Additional requirements for information required for conditional use applications are found in Code § 155-11.1.G.

Compliance with Code §155-11.1.F(9)

59. The proposed modifications must meet all conditions of uses expressed in the use classification section of this chapter, Code §155-11.1F(9)(f)[1]. The Applicant's request to modify conditions does not involve a development plan or a new use. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 30)

60. The proposed modifications do not conflict with the Township and County Comprehensive Plans and other plans adopted by the Township, pursuant to Code §155-11.1F(9)(f)[2]. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 31)

61. The proposed modifications are consistent with the spirit, purposes and intent of the IN zoning district complying with §155-11.1F(9)(f)[3]. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 31)

62. The proposed modifications are in conformance with all applicable requirements of this Chapter and all municipal, state and federal codes applicable to the use or process in question based on the exhibits submitted into the record and testimony, as required by §155-11.1F(9)(f)[4]. Here, the proposed modifications are consistent with the current zoning code. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 31) Moreover, the record exhibits and testimony at the conditional use hearing document multiple reviews by Township Staff and the Planning Commission, as well as meetings with the local Civic Associations, which have strengthened conformance with this Chapter and all applicable municipal, state and federal codes.

63. The proposed modifications comply with Code §155-11.1F(9)(f)[5] because the use is suitable to the Property in question when considering traffic, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, location and design of parking areas, adjacent land uses and other impacts on the surrounding area. The scale of the use relates to and complements the surrounding area. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 31-32)

64. The Property is currently served by public sewer, in compliance with §155-11.1F(9)(f)[6]. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 32)

65. There is substantial evidence that the conditional use application complies with the general criteria of this chapter. It has recommendations for approval from Staff and the Planning Commission, as well as the support of two neighbors.

Compliance with Code §155-11.1.G

66. This section does not apply to uses regulated by 155-7.1, HROD Historic Resources Overlay District, and uses involving fewer than 24 participants per day, pursuant to Code §155-11.1.G(1)(a, b). Here, the Applicant stated the conditional use application is not regulated by the Historic Resources Overlay District, even though there is a Class 2 Historic Resource on the Property, because the use was not requested pursuant to that district. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 32-33) The Organ Historical Society uses the Historic Resource, not NLT. *See supra*, para. 10.

67. The Applicant has complied with Code §155-11.1.G(2-7) by providing required information with its conditional use application and subsequent materials admitted into the record. The conditional use approval currently requested is not for approval of the use, which was previously granted in CU No. 3739C. No conditions on the Property relating to visitor information and operations, separation requirements, traffic, loading, queuing, lighting and landscape buffers will change. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 34-36) The separation requirements of Code §155-11.1G(3) are not applicable to this application because Stoneleigh is not zoned residential. There will not be any changes to the lighting requirements. Stoneleigh will continue to comply with Chapter 105, noise,

exterior lighting, and ambient standards. The proposed modifications won't have any impact on existing landscape buffers area. (N.T. 9/25/25 at 35-36)

68. A traffic impact study was not required by the Director of Building and Planning in connection with this conditional use application, pursuant to §155-11.1.G(4).

II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

69. NLT's nature preserve use on the Property located at 330 Spring Mill Road and 1829 County Line Road is permitted in the IN district pursuant to Code §155-5.1 and Table 5.1.

70. The previous conditions imposed by the Board of Commissioners on the approval of NLT's estate preservation lot by conditional use in CU No. 3739C may be modified by conditional use pursuant to Code §155-4.4.C(6).

71. NLT proposes modifications of five (5) conditions pursuant to Code §§155-4.4.C(6) and 155-11.1.F & G.

72. The Applicant has met all applicable specific criteria for the grant of conditional use approval found in Code § 155-11.1.F.

73. The Applicant has met all applicable specific criteria for the grant of conditional use approval found in Code § 155-11.1.G in connection with its prior application (CU No. 3739C). They are not applicable here because no site improvements or new uses are proposed on the Property.

74. The Applicant has met its initial burden of persuasion that the application complies with the specific requirements of the proposed use set forth in Article V, Uses. Code §155-11.1.F.

75. No substantial evidence has been presented that the application does not comply with the general criteria of this chapter, pursuant to §155-11.1.F(4), or will adversely impact the public health, safety or welfare.

76. As conditioned herein, the Applicant has met its ultimate burden of persuasion that the application complies with the general criteria of this chapter and will not adversely impact the public health, safety or welfare. Code §155-11.1.F(4).

77. As conditioned herein, the proposed modifications of conditions of approval will not have an adverse impact on the public health, safety and welfare not normally generated by those kind of uses and will not pose a substantial threat to the health and safety of the community.

III. DISCUSSION

Natural Lands Trust, Incorporated seeks to modify some of the conditions imposed by the Board of Commissioners when it established an Estate Preservation Lot by conditional use approval in 2015 (CU 3739C). The Property, known as Stoneleigh, became a native plant preserve owned and operated by NLT for the benefit of the public, as well as headquarters for the Organ Historical Society in the mansion house on the grounds, as a result of the conditional use approval.

When Lower Merion Township enacted a new zoning code in 2020, Stoneleigh was rezoned as an Environmental (Nature Preserve) use in the Institutional Nature Preserve (IN) Zoning District, which allows native plant preserve use by right. The new zoning code regulates outdoor events at institutional environmental uses with less restrictive provisions than the conditions of approval imposed on Stoneleigh in 2015. Moreover, the conditions of approval regarding outdoor events at Stoneleigh reference Code §155-11.O in the old zoning code which

is no longer in effect. NLT's current conditional use application to modify conditions is also an opportunity to update the conditions of approval so that they reference the new zoning code rather than the old one.

Natural Lands Trust specifically requests modification of the following conditions:

9. The applicants shall be permitted to hold up to twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot at one time, six (6) of which may include outdoor amplified music subject to Code Section 155-11.O.2.c.
10. The twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot are limited to the hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday per Code Section 155-11.O.2.c.
18. The applicants shall provide a crossing guard or an off-duty police officer to chaperone pedestrians from the Villanova train station and any nearby off-site parking locations for the twelve (12) events authorized under Section 155-11.O.2.c, as appropriate.
20. The pedestrian gate at the intersection of Spring Mill Road and County Line Road shall be clearly marked and available for use by attendees of the twelve (12) events authorized under Section 155-11.O.2.c, as appropriate.
23. Any lighting associated with the twelve (12) events authorized under Section 155-11.O.2.c shall be reasonably shielded to direct light away from the perimeter of the property and shall be powered down within 30 minutes and turned off within 60 minutes of the end of each event.

See, Conditions of Approval for CU No. 3739C.

The current Code's use regulations for IN Institutional Nature Preserve, Environmental Uses state:

Environmental (nature preserve) or estate preservation lot uses are permitted subject to the following:

- 1) Shall be in compliance with 155-4.4, institutional districts.
(...)
- 3) Permitted uses are further regulated as follows:
(...)
 - (c) Outdoor events with outdoor amplified music, such as special exhibits, fairs, galas, retreats and performances are subject to:

- [1] A maximum of 12 events per year.
- [2] The event hours are limited to between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm, Sunday through Thursday, and 9:00 am to 11:00 pm, Friday and Saturday.
- [3] Any amplified sound source shall be directed away from adjacent residences and comply with the Township Noise Ordinance, Chapter 105.
- [4] No activity, including temporary parking, associated with such events can take place within 100 feet of property lines.
- [5] If an event requires more parking than exists at the site, temporary parking may be permitted on the lawn areas on the lot if located more than 100 feet away from any property line. If temporary parking cannot be accommodated on lawn areas on the lot, an off-site parking location shall be provided along with a shuttle service to shuttle attendees to and from the event.

(...)

Article V, Uses, Table 5.3, Use Regulations, IN Institutional Nature Preserve, Environmental Use Regulations.

Condition No. 9. Number of Events with Amplified Music

NTL requests that condition No. 9 be removed from the conditions of approval because Table 5.3 allows twelve (12) outdoor events per year with outdoor amplified music. Currently, NTL is limited to six (6) outdoor events with outdoor amplified music, or 50% less than what the zoning code permits for an institutional environmental use. NTL's request to remove condition No. 9 is reasonable and equitable. It also has support from two neighbors who spoke at the conditional use hearing and the Planning Commission

Condition No. 10. Hours of Events

NTL requests that condition No. 10 be removed from the conditions of approval because Table 5.3 allows twelve (12) events per year with event hours limited to between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., Sunday through Thursday, and 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday. The hours for events specified in condition No. 10 are duplicative of the hours for events in Table

5.3. It should be noted that NLT is not seeking to expand the hours for outdoor events. NLT's request to remove condition No. 10 is recommended to remove redundant conditions.

Condition No. 18. Crossing Guard or Police Escort to
Chaperone Pedestrians from the Villanova Train Station

NLT requests that condition No. 18 be modified to remove the term "twelve (12) events" because it will provide a crossing guard or police escort from the train station for any event at which attendees need to be shepherded across the street to Stoneleigh, even if they number more than twelve (12) per year. As such, NLT is offering to expand its services to the general public if more events are permitted in the future. NLT's request to remove the term "twelve (12) events" from condition No. 18 is recommended. Moreover, reference to Section 155-11.O.2.c should be removed from the condition since the ordinance is no longer in effect.

Condition No. 20. Pedestrian Gate

NLT requests that condition No. 20 be modified to remove the term "twelve (12) events" because the pedestrian gate at the intersection of Spring Mill Road and County Line Road will be clearly marked and available for use by attendees at all events, as appropriate. As such, NLT is offering to expand access to the pedestrian gate if more events are permitted in the future. NLT's request to remove the term "twelve (12) events" from condition No. 20 is recommended. Moreover, reference to Section 155-11.O.2.c should be removed from the condition since the ordinance is no longer in effect.

Condition No. 23 Lighting

NLT requests that condition No. 23 be modified to remove the term "twelve (12) events" because lighting provided for outdoor events shall be reasonably shielded to direct light away from the perimeter of the property and shall be powered down within 30 minutes and turned off within 60 minutes of the end of each event. As such, NLT is offering to reasonably shield

lighting away from the perimeter of the property during all outdoor events, not just twelve (12) events per year. NLT's request to remove the term "twelve (12) events" from condition No. 25 is recommended. Moreover, reference to Section 155-11.O.2.c should be removed from the condition since the ordinance is no longer in effect.

The Conditional Use Standard

An applicant for a conditional use has the initial burden of proving compliance with specific criteria set forth in a zoning ordinance. *In re Thompson*, 896 A.2d 659 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2006). If an applicant satisfies its initial burden, the burden shifts to objectors to show that the proposed use would be detrimental to public health, safety and welfare. *Sheetz, Inc. v. Phoenixville Borough Council*, 804 A.2d 113 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2002). A "conditional use application *must* be granted unless the objectors present sufficient evidence that the proposed use has a detrimental effect on the public health, safety and welfare." *In re McGlynn*, 974 A.2d 525, 537 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2009) (emphasis added). The Applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that modifying the above specified conditions meets the criteria for conditional use approval found in Code § 155-11.1F.9(f).

NLT has met its initial burden of persuasion by showing compliance with specific conditional use criteria set forth in zoning ordinances, and its ultimate burden of persuasion by showing compliance with general criteria and adequately demonstrating the proposed use will not be detrimental to public health, safety and welfare. As a result, conditional use approval to modify the above specified conditions imposed by the Board of Commissioners in connection with conditional use approval (CU No. 3739C), pursuant to Code §155-4.4.C.6, is recommended with conditions.

The scope of this conditional use application is narrowly confined to modifications of prior conditions of approval in CU No. 3739C. Some land development is planned in the future as NLT is in the process of applying for lot line changes of the Oakwell estate (subdivision and reverse subdivision). It is also applying for amendments to the zoning code and zoning map. The proposed text amendments relate to Article V use regulations. Those matters are not part of the instant conditional use application and will come before the Planning Commission in the upcoming months.

For the reasons set forth above, the following order is recommended to the Board of Commissioners:

ORDER

And now on this _____ day of October, 2025, with respect to the property located at 330 Spring Mill Road and 1829 County Line Road, Lower Merion Township, further identified as Parcel I.D. Nos. 40-00-56504-00-3 and 40-00-56504-01-2, upon the application of Natural Lands Trust, Incorporated for conditional use approval to modify a condition imposed by the Board of Commissioners (CU No. 3739C), pursuant to Code §155-4.4.C(6) and the application procedure and standards found in §155-11.1.F & G, is granted, subject to the following conditions, for the reasons set forth in the foregoing recommended findings of fact, conclusions of law and discussion.

Conditional use approval is granted on and conditioned on adherence to the testimony, plans, documents, and exhibits in the record presented at the conditional use hearing on Sept. 25, 2025.

This grant of conditional use approval is further conditioned on:

1. Condition No. 9 shall be redacted from the conditions of approval in CU No. 3739C as follows:

9. ~~The applicants shall be permitted to hold up to twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot at one time, six (6) of which may include outdoor amplified music subject to Code Section 155-11.O.2.c.~~

2. Condition No. 10 shall be redacted from the conditions of approval in CU No. 3739C as follows:

10. ~~The twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot are limited to the hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.~~

~~Sunday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday
per Code Section 155-11.0.2.e.~~

3. Condition No. 18 in the conditions of approval in CU No. 3739C shall be modified as follows:

18. The applicants shall provide a crossing guard or an off-duty police officer to chaperone pedestrians from the Villanova train station and any nearby off-site parking locations for ~~the twelve (12) events~~ authorized under Section 155-11.0.2.e., as appropriate.

4. Condition No. 20 in the conditions of approval in CU No. 3739C shall be modified as follows:

20. The pedestrian gate at the intersection of Spring Mill Road and County Line Road shall be clearly marked and available for use by attendees of the events authorized under the ordinance ~~the twelve (12) events authorized under Section 155-11.0.2.e.~~, as appropriate.

5. Condition No. 23 in the conditions of approval in CU No. 3739C shall be modified as follows:

23. Any lighting associated with ~~the twelve (12) events authorized under~~ Section 155-11.0.2.e. will be required to comply with those requirements in the ordinance and shall be reasonably shielded to direct light away from the perimeter of the property and shall be powered down within 30 minutes and turned off within 60 minutes of the end of each event.

6. The use of the property shall be consistent with the testimony and evidence offered during the conditional use hearings.

7. The use of the property shall at all times be compliant with all applicable laws, ordinances, and regulations not modified by this grant of conditional use approval. All other conditions imposed by the Board of Commissioners in CU No. 3739 shall remain in full force and effect.

This recommendation for grant of Conditional Use approval is based on the documents and plans submitted in support of the application, all of which are specifically incorporated by reference thereto.

By: *Pamela M. Loughman*
Pamela M. Loughman, Esq.
Conditional Use Hearing Officer

Staff Report

Meeting Date: November 12, 2025

TO: Building and Planning Committee

FROM: Department of Building and Planning – Colleen Hall, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Conditional Use – 330 Spring Mill Road & 1829 County Line Road, Natural Lands Trust, Villanova, Ward 6, CU# 3931C

PROPOSAL:

The Natural Lands Trust, (NLT), and Denise Yarnoff, (authorized agent and applicant) on behalf of the Stoneleigh is seeking to modify conditions imposed by the Board of Commissioners pursuant to Zoning Code [Section 155-4.4\(C\)6](#) to allow the Preserve to remove two conditions relating to the number of events and hours of operation for such events. NLT's rational is that the conditions of the Conditional Use Approval are redundant since identical requirements governing events are included in the IN Zoning District under which the subject property is located.



On March 18, 2015, the Board of Commissioners granted conditional use for an Estate Preservation Lot at 330 Spring Mill Road, Stoneleigh. There were several conditions placed on the use, the applicant is requesting to remove two of the conditions in this proposal:

- The applicants shall be permitted to hold up to twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot at one time, six (6) of which may include outdoor amplified music subject to Code Section 155-11.O.2.c.
 - The twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot are limited to the hours of 9 am to 9 pm Sunday through Thursday and 9 am to 11 pm Friday and Saturday per Code Section 155 11.O.2.e.
-
- Prior to February 2020 Stoneleigh operated as a conditional use in a residential zoning district as an Estate Preservation Lot. After the adoption of the new zoning code in February 2020, Stoneleigh was rezoned as Environmental (Nature Preserve) use in the Institutional Natural Preserve (IN) Zoning District. Conditions imposed by the Zoning Hearing Board and Conditions of Approval run with the land and were not changed by the rezoning. The Environmental Nature Preserve is now a regulated use in the zoning code.

The Zoning Code includes a provision under [Article 4.4.C Institutional District Applicability](#) that states:

6. All previous conditions imposed by the Zoning Hearing Board on the approval of institutional uses by special exception and all imposed conditions by the Board of Commissioners by

conditional use shall remain in force but may be modified by conditional use. All previous conditions imposed by the Board of Commissioners on the grant of land development approval for institutional uses shall remain in force but may be modified by the Board of Commissioners, by amendment of the land development approval.

PREVIOUS CONDITIONAL USE DECISION:

In Appeal No. 3739C (attached) the Board of Commissioners granted, on March 18, 2015, a Conditional Use to use the property as an Estate Preservation Lot as previously permitted by Zoning Code Section 155-110. The applicant requested two complementary uses, which were permitted on an Estate Preservation Lot:

- The Natural Lands Trust proposed to use the property as a native plant preserve. The Natural Lands Trust has stated that the property will serve as a setting for reflection, inspiration and learning related to horticulture and the natural environment.
- The Organ Historical Society (OHS) proposed to use the main house, a Class II historic resource, as their headquarters and to function as a repository for the book and periodical collections and the archives of the OHS, as well as a resource for scholars and a source of education about the American pipe organ.

On December 17, 2014, the Board of Commissioners adopted the Estate Preservation Lot Ordinance, authorizing an Estate Preservation Lot as a conditional use. The ordinance was enacted to:

- Promote Environmental Preservation by permanently protecting large properties from future subdivision via conservation easement.
- Promote Historic Preservation by permanently protecting historic resources via façade easement; and
- Ensure compatibility with adjacent residential land uses.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION & HISTORY:

Property Description

- The Stoneleigh natural preserve occupies 41.72-acres which is zoned IN and is encompassed by (LDR1 & LDR2) Low Density Residential Zoning Districts. The site has been improved with a natural garden and conservation resource for the community since 2015. The gardens and grounds of this historic estate are maintained by Natural Lands and are utilized daily for public enjoyment, which includes educational and cultural events. The property has three (3) frontages which are located along Montgomery Avenue, County Line Road and Spring Mill Roads. The property is bordered by Villanova University to the west (across County Line Road), single family detached homes to the south (across Spring Mill Road); single family homes on Greenwood Court to the east, and single-family homes to the north.

History

- The Tudor revival mansion was originally built between 1877-1890 by Edmund C. Smith, Vice President of the Pennsylvania Railroad Co., and was subsequently owned by Samuel T. Bodine, Vice President of United Gas Improvement Company, who named the estate Stoneleigh. The main house was designed and constructed by the Wilson Brothers firm and alterations were subsequently introduced in 1901 by architect Guy King. The property is listed on the Lower Merion Historic Resource Inventory as a Class II Historic Resource. The property contains several formal gardens for which the Olmstead Brothers served as landscape architects from 1900 until 1913. In 2016, the Haas family donated

Stoneleigh to Natural Lands for public enjoyment and to nurture and enhance the natural beauty of the community resource.

MEETING SCHEDULE & PROCESS:

The tentative schedule for the Conditional Use request are as follows:

	September 8, 2025	Planning Commission	Review of the Conditional Use request
UPCOMING	September 25, 2025	Hearing Officer	Conditional Use Hearing
	November 12, 2025	Building & Planning Committee	Review of the Conditional Use request
	November 19, 2025	Board of Commissioners	Review of the Conditional Use request

Additional information about the Township's Land Development approval process is illustrated in the [Subdivision & Land Development Flowchart](#). This application is currently in the *Stage 4: Public Meetings* portion of the process.

CONDITIONAL USE:

What is a Conditional Use Request?

- A use or standard deviation permitted by Conditional Use is expressly permitted, but subject to a hearing to determine whether the conditional use application is consistent with the public interest as expressed in specific standards and criteria established in the Zoning Code. Conditional uses are usually reserved for land uses or standards that necessitate more control, additional safeguards, or greater flexibility. This is typically accomplished by imposing conditions of approval. The difference between a special exception and a conditional use is that special exceptions are decided by the Zoning Hearing Board, while conditional uses are decided by the Board of Commissioners.

The [Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code](#) states:

Zoning ordinances may contain provisions for conditional uses to be allowed or denied by the governing body after recommendations by the planning agency and hearing, pursuant to express standards and criteria set forth in the zoning ordinance. Notice of hearings on conditional uses shall be provided in accordance with section 908(1), and notice of the decision shall be provided in accordance with section 908(10). In allowing a conditional use, the governing body may attach such reasonable conditions and safeguards, other than those related to off-site transportation or road improvements, in addition to those expressed in the ordinance, as it may deem necessary to implement the purposes of this act and the zoning ordinance.

Zoning Code Section [155-11.1.F](#) regulates the conditional use procedure. It requires that the applicant have the initial burden of persuasion that the application complies with the specific requirements of Section 155-11.1.F. Opponents have the initial duty of presenting substantial evidence that the application does not comply with the general criteria of this chapter, but the applicant shall retain the ultimate burden of persuasion concerning those criteria.

(f) Criteria for conditional use approval. The Board of Commissioners shall grant a conditional use only if it finds substantial evidence that any proposed development plan submitted complies with all of the following:

[1] Meets all conditions of uses expressed in the use classification section of this chapter.

- [2] Does not conflict with the Township and County Comprehensive Plans and other plans adopted by the Township.*
- [3] Is consistent with the spirit, purposes, and intent of the applicable zoning district.*
- [4] Is in conformance with all applicable requirements of this chapter and all municipal, state and federal codes applicable to the use or process in question.*
- [5] Is suitable for the property in question. This criterion shall consider issues such as traffic, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, location and design of parking areas, adjacent land use(s), and other impacts on the surrounding area. If the proposal is adjacent to a residential district, the scale of the use shall relate to and complement the surrounding area.*
- [6] Public utilities. All uses shall be capable of being served by public sewer. A use may be permitted to be served by an on-lot sanitary system only if deemed acceptable by the Board of Commissioners and the adopted 537 Plan of the Township, upon recommendation of the Township Engineer. Sufficient water supply must be available to accommodate all the needs of the proposed use.*

Applicant's Burden:

The applicant has the burden of satisfying the Conditional Use criteria at the Conditional Use Hearing. The staff report complements the Conditional Use Hearing by providing background and identifying any planning issues related to the request. The Planning Commission may recommend that the applicant address issues at the Conditional Use Hearing and may also recommend conditions be imposed with the Conditional Use order to address specific issues.

ADDITIONAL REVIEWS:

- **Rosemont/Villanova Civic Association:** The Civic association will review the applicant's proposal at their September 10, 2025 meeting. The applicant has been trying to arrange a meeting, but the civic did not meet over the summer. Any comments from the civic will be forwarded to the hearing and the Building and Planning Committee.
- **Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) Review:** The County did not review this application.
- **Township Engineer's Review (Attached):** The Township Engineer's did not review this application.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION & FUTURE LAND DEVELOPMENTS:

The Conditional Use proposal includes the removal of the following two conditions:

The applicants shall be permitted to hold up to twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot at one time, six (6) of which may include outdoor amplified music subject to Code Section 155-11.O.2.c.

The twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot are limited to the hours of 9 am to 9 pm Sunday through Thursday and 9 am to 11 pm Friday and Saturday per Code Section 155 11.O.2.e.

Even if these conditions were removed from the previous Conditional Use, the Environmental (Nature Preserve) still includes conditions related to the number of events and the duration of these events. Below are the regulations for the Environmental Preserve, and the sections that relate to the number of events

and duration are noted in bold. Stoneleigh would be subject to these Environmental (Nature Preserve) regulations in the Zoning Code.

Article V, Uses, Table 5.3, Use Regulations, IN Institutional Nature Preserve, Environmental Use Regulations:

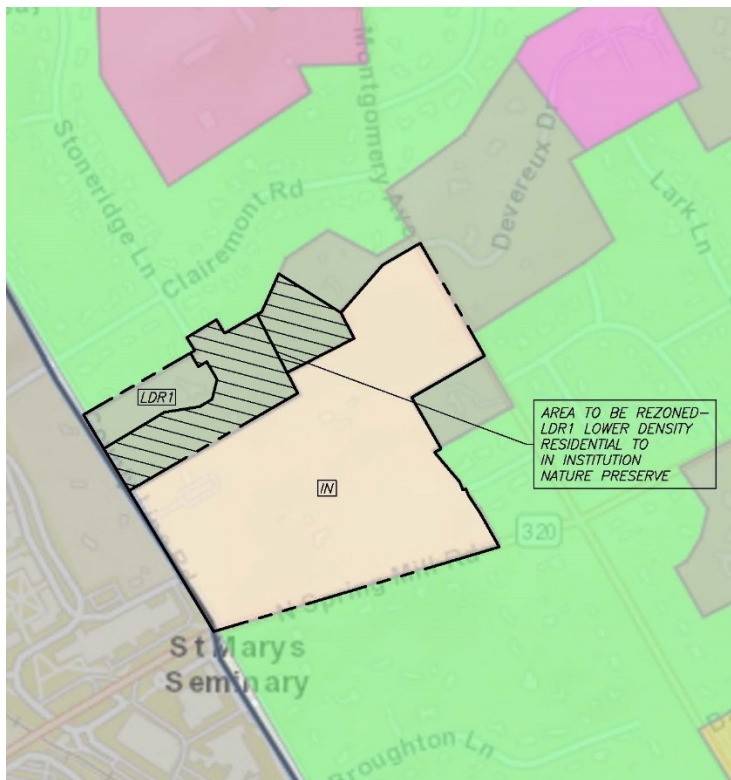
The Environmental (Nature Preserve) or estate Preservation Lot are permitted subject to the following:

- (1) Shall be in compliance with §155-4.4, Institutional districts.*
- (2) On Lots of minimum 25 contiguous acres with frontage on Primary, Secondary and/or Tertiary streets, permitted uses are:*
 - a. Preservation, management and/or enhancement of land areas for outdoor passive recreation and/or scenic enjoyment for the benefit of the general public from dawn to dusk only, provided that a conservation easement for the estate preservation lot is approved and recorded by the Township.*
 - b. The preservation and/or enhancement of an historic structure, including the adaptive reuse of the historic resource and existing associated structures for historical, environmental, horticultural, cultural, arts, genealogical and musical purposes, provided that a guarantee for the permanent preservation of the principal historic structure is provided*
- (3) Permitted uses are further regulated as follows:*
 - a. The adaptive reuse of principal historic structures and accessory structures may include facilities with associated offices, subject to:*
 - i. The number of employees working within the structures is limited to one person per 500 square feet of floor area dedicated to the use, not including the employees employed for the preservation, management and enhancement of the property.*
 - ii. On-site parking shall be provided as specified in Article VIII, Parking Standards*
 - b. Educational events for the general public, subject to:***
 - i. A maximum of 125 daily visitors permitted.***
 - ii. On-site parking, including visitor parking, shall be provided as specified in Article VIII, Parking Standards.*
 - c. Outdoor events with outdoor amplified music, such as special exhibits, fairs, galas, retreats and performances subject to:***
 - i. A maximum of 12 events per year.***
 - ii. The event hours are limited to between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm, Sunday through Thursday, and 9:00 am to 11:00 pm, Friday and Saturday.***
 - iii. Any amplified sound source shall be directed away from adjacent residences and comply with the Township Noise Ordinance, Chapter 105.*
 - iv. No activity, including temporary parking, associated with such events can take place within 100 feet of property lines.*
 - v. If an event requires more parking than exists at the site, temporary parking may be permitted on the lawn areas on the lot if located more than 100 feet away from any property line. If temporary parking cannot be accommodated on lawn areas on the lot, an off-site parking location shall be provided along with a shuttle service to shuttle attendees to and from the event.*

Future Land Developments

On August 29, 2025, Natural Lands Trust submitted two proposals relating to the existing preserved property, Stoneleigh, at 330 Spring Mill Road and 1829 County Line Road and the adjacent 10.3-acre parcel, known as Oakwell, at 1835 County Line Road and 1800 W. Montgomery Avenue.

Stoneleigh, approximately 41.72 acres, has been preserved by Natural Lands Trust as a conservation resource since 2015. The gardens and grounds of the historic estate are open for daily public enjoyment. Stoneleigh hosts events for private and philanthropic purposes throughout the year. Natural Lands Trust has been provided the unique opportunity to expand its preserve by incorporating 10.3 acres of adjoining property into Stoneleigh. This land was once part of the Stoneleigh estate, and it will now be reunited with the property to restore its historic connection. A balance of the 1835 County Line Road parcel (3.3 acres), which includes the Oakwell estate house, is planned to remain as a home for the Wyncote Foundation. In order to complete this exciting endeavor, Natural Lands Trust submitted a Lot Line Change to combine the larger property into Stoneleigh and keep the smaller 3.3-acre parcel for the Oakwell mansion property.



The second proposal of the Stoneleigh expansion is to rezone from LDR1 to IN Institutional Nature Preserve, which is consistent with the zoning for Stoneleigh. This would create a unified 52-acre parcel to be zoned IN Nature Preserve for Stoneleigh. The Oakwell mansion property, 3.3 acres, will remain zoned LDR1. Natural Lands Trust submitted a Petition to amend the zoning code and zoning map to rezone the Stoneleigh expansion and amend the provisions of Article V, Uses, Table 5.3, Use Regulations, as noted above.

The changes to the code language relate to the Environmental (Nature Preserve) section of the code. The proposed text amendments to Article V are designed to provide greater flexibility for operations to better accommodate visitors, allow more community events without an

arbitrary cap, and clarify the diverse experiences and uses. These changes will be before the Planning Commission in the upcoming months. These proposals will be discussed at that time. Staff felt it was important to introduce these plans that Stoneleigh has for their property and the newly acquired Oakwell property, at this time and how it relates to this Conditional Use request.

Since the Conditional Use conditions do not change even if text changes are approved, the applicant must first remove the conditions in the older decision. At this time, this approval would be for the removal of the two conditions and replacement with the text as noted above in the code related to the number of events and the duration of these events in the existing code. The Planning Commission will have the

opportunity to comment on the future proposed changes to the code when that proposal is before them this fall.

Natural Lands Trust is also proposing to make some improvements to the property to accommodate the introduction of additional resources, gardens, and grounds with the consolidation of the new lot. A Tentative Sketch that depicts the expansion of an existing guest parking area, creates a small welcome center and garden plaza, relocates the Tea House building from its current location along the northern property boundary and introduces some additional employee parking spaces, trails and other infrastructure.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS & STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation on the Conditional Use Application.

- Staff supports approval of Conditional Use application.

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the this Conditional Use request.

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

RESOLUTION NO. _____

WHEREAS, the Township of Lower Merion received an application designated as CU Application #3931C, filed on behalf of Natural Lands Trust, Incorporated d/b/a Natural Lands (“NLT”), which seeks conditional use approval to modify conditions of a prior conditional use approval granted by the Board of Commissioners (Appeal No. 3739C) which imposed conditions that regulate outdoor events at 330 Spring Mill Road and 1829 County Line Road, Lower Merion Township, further identified as Parcel I.D. Nos. 40-00-56504-00-3 and 40-00-56504-01-2 (“Property”), more commonly known as "Stoneleigh," and Code §155-4.4.C(6) and the application procedure and standards found in §155-11.1.F & G;

WHEREAS, the application was referred to Pamela M. Loughman, Esq., Hearing Officer, to take testimony and make recommended Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and an Order for the consideration of the Board of Commissioners;

WHEREAS, specifically, the Hearing Officer received testimony and evidence in consideration of the Applicant’s request to modify and also remove certain conditions of approval which relate to number of events, lighting, circulation, and attendance;

WHEREAS, on September 25, 2025, following a public hearing on the application, the Hearing Officer submitted to the Board of Commissioners her “Recommendations for Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order,” (the “Report”); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners, having reviewed and considered the Hearing Officer’s Report, wishes to render its decision.

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Lower Merion hereby resolves:

1. Paragraphs 1 through 59 set forth in the attached Report, together with the Discussion contained therein, are all hereby adopted in their entirety as the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law of the Board of Commissioners with respect to CU Application #3931C, the application of NLT, which concerns the Property, more commonly known as "Stoneleigh.”
2. In consideration thereof, the Board adopts and issues the following order, which is consistent with the Hearing Officer’s proposed order, with respect to the aforementioned application:

ORDER

And now on this _____ day of _____, 2025, with respect to the property located at 330 Spring Mill Road and 1829 County Line Road, Lower Merion Township, further identified as Parcel I.D. Nos. 40-00-56504-00-3 and 40-00-56504-01-2, upon the application of Natural Lands Trust Incorporated for conditional use approval to modify a condition imposed by the Board of Commissioners (Appeal No. 3739C), pursuant to Code §155-4.4.C(6) and the application procedure and standards found in §155-11.1.F & G, is granted, subject to the following conditions, for the reasons set forth in the Report.

Conditional use approval is granted on, and conditioned on, adherence to the testimony, plans, documents, and exhibits in the record presented at the conditional use hearing on Sept. 25, 2025. This grant of conditional use approval is further conditioned on:

1. Condition No. 9 shall be redacted from the conditions of approval in Appeal No. 3739C as follows:

9. ~~The applicants shall be permitted to hold up to twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot at one time, six (6) of which may include outdoor amplified music subject to Code Section 155-11.O.2.e.~~

2. Condition No. 10 shall be redacted from the conditions of approval in Appeal No. 3739C as follows:

10. ~~The twelve (12) events per year with more than 125 people on the Estate Preservation Lot are limited to the hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday per Code Section 155-11.O.2.e.~~

3. Condition No. 18 in the conditions of approval in Appeal No. 3739C shall be modified as follows:

18. The applicants shall provide a crossing guard or an off-duty police officer to chaperone pedestrians from the Villanova train station and any nearby off-site parking locations for the twelve (12) events authorized under Section 155-11.O.2.e, as appropriate.

4. Condition No. 20 in the conditions of approval in Appeal No. 3739C shall be modified as follows:

20. The pedestrian gate at the intersection of Spring Mill Road and County Line Road shall be clearly marked and available for use by attendees of the events authorized under the ordinance the twelve (12) events authorized under Section 155-11.O.2.e, as appropriate.

5. Condition No. 23 in the conditions of approval in Appeal No. 3739C shall be modified as follows:

23. Any lighting associated with the twelve (12) events authorized under Section 155-11.O.2.e will be required to comply with those requirements in the ordinance. shall be reasonably shielded to direct light away from the perimeter of

the property and shall be powered down within 30 minutes and turned off within 60 minutes of the end of each event.

6. The use of the property shall be consistent with the testimony and evidence offered during the conditional use hearings.

7. The use of the property shall at all times be compliant with all applicable laws, ordinances, and regulations not modified by this grant of conditional use approval. All other conditions imposed by the Board of Commissioners in Appeal N. 3739 shall remain in full force and effect.

This grant of Conditional Use approval is based on the documents and plans submitted in support of the application, all of which are specifically incorporated by reference thereto.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

BY: _____
Todd M. Sinai, President

ATTEST:

Jody L. Kelley, Secretary



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Building & Planning

ITEM: **PRELIMINARY LOT LINE CHANGE - 330 SPRING MILL ROAD & 1829 COUNTY LINE ROAD, 1835 COUNTY LINE ROAD, 1800 WEST MONTGOMERY AVENUE, (NATURAL LANDS TRUST), VILLANOVA, WARD 6, LD# 3932LLC**

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners approval of a Preliminary Lot Line Change Plan. The Plan dated August 28, 2025, last revised September 19, 2025, prepared by Site Engineering Concepts, LLC., shows the expansion of Stoneleigh through a proposed subdivision that reduces the total number of parcels from three to two by consolidating land. Parcel C (1800 West Montgomery Avenue) and a portion of Parcel B (1835 County Line Road) are merged to create new Parcel 1A (330 Spring Mill Road / 1829 County Line Road - Stoneleigh), increasing Parcel 1A from approximately 40 net acres to just over 50 net acres. As a result, a new Parcel 2B (1835 County Line Road) is created and reduced in size from 10 net acres to just over 3 net acres and will maintain the Oakwell Mansion.

The applicant is requesting the following waivers from the Township Code:

- §135-4.4.B(2) to create a lot which is excessively irregular
- § 135-4.9(F)(3) to defer installation of sidewalk

On October 6, 2025, the Planning Commission recommended approval subject to the conditions shown on the following pages, which shall be complied with on the Final Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Natural Lands Trust - Conditions of Approval](#)
[Natural Lands Trust - LLC - Issues Memo](#)
[Natural Lands Trust- Staff Background Memo](#)
[Natural Lands Trust - TE Review](#)
[Natural Lands Trust - MCPC Review](#)
[Natural Lands Trust - Slides](#)

**LD#3932LLC – 330 SPRING MILL ROAD AND 1829 COUNTY LINE ROAD,
1835 COUNTY LINE ROAD, 1800 WEST MONTGOMERY AVENUE, VILLANOVA, WARD 6
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PLANNING COMMMISSION ON OCTOBER 6, 2025**

Land Development #: 3932LLC
Address and Ward: 330 Spring Mill Road & 1829 County Line Road, 1835 County Line Road,
1800 West Montgomery Avenue, (Natural Lands Trust), Villanova, Ward 6
Expiration Date: December 7, 2025
Zoning District: LDR1 & IN
Applicant / Owner: Denise Yarnoff on behalf of Natural Lands Trust

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners approval of a Preliminary Lot Line Change/Subdivision Application. The Plan dated August 28, 2025, last revised September 19, 2025, prepared by Site Engineering Concepts, LLC., shows the expansion of Stoneleigh through a proposed subdivision that reduces the total number of parcels from three to two by consolidating land. Parcel C (1800 West Montgomery Avenue) and a portion of Parcel B (1835 County Line Road) are merged to create new Parcel 1A (330 Spring Mill Road / 1829 County Line Road - Stoneleigh), increasing Parcel 1A from approximately 40 net acres to just over 50 net acres. As a result, a new Parcel 2B (1835 County Line Road) is created and reduced in size from 10 net acres to just over 3 net acres and will maintain the Oakwell Mansion. No other improvements are proposed.

In addition, the Applicant requested the following waivers from the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance:

- A. §135-4.4(B)(2) To create a lot which is excessively irregular; and
- B. §135-4.9(F)(3) To defer the installations of sidewalks along County Line Road.

On November 3, 2025, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Plan and requested code waivers subject to the following conditions:

Township Engineer's Review

1. The Township Engineer's review letter dated September 29, 2025, shall be incorporated by reference into these conditions of approval to the extent the same is not consistent with these conditions of approval.

Building Use

2. The proposed use of the buildings on Lot B and C shall be noted on the plans. The Zoning Officer shall confirm that the proposed building occupation is consistent with the use requirements for the zoning district.

Utilities

3. The applicant shall show on-lot septic systems and connections on the plan. The parcels shall not be subdivided in a manner that segregates the on-lot disposal system serving an existing building on an

**LD#3932LLC – 330 SPRING MILL ROAD AND 1829 COUNTY LINE ROAD,
1835 COUNTY LINE ROAD, 1800 WEST MONTGOMERY AVENUE, VILLANOVA, WARD 6
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PLANNING COMMMISSION ON OCTOBER 6, 2025**

adjacent property. Any modifications to the on-lot sewage disposal systems shall require separate permits and approval from the Montgomery County Health Department.

4. The sanitary sewer lateral connection to the public main or on-lot sewer system shall be shown for each property.

Easements & Covenants

5. The applicant shall provide easement language for any shared utilities and submit them to the Township for review. The language of any new or revised easement shall be subject to the approval of the Township Solicitor prior to recording the Final Plan.

Landscape and site Amenities

6. All existing trees shall be de-vined.
7. All trees in the right-of-way shall be trimmed to improve site distance. Dead or diseased trees shall be removed.
8. A green bench shall be installed along the Montgomery Avenue frontage, until such time a sidewalk is installed. The applicant shall provide a public easement, for the extent needed, for the green bench. The Township Solicitor shall approve the language of the easement.

Driveway

9. The limits of the driveway for 1835 County Line Road shall be clearly shown on the plans. Any paving shown to be removed shall be clearly shown as removed.
10. The loop driveway for 1835 County Line Road that crosses the proposed property line shall be removed.
11. The applicant shall provide a driveway easement for any portions of the driveways that cross over shared property boundaries. Property boundary pins shall be added to the driveway along points where the lot line change direction

Plan Drafting

12. The plans shall be signed and sealed by a licensed surveyor.
13. Concrete road control monuments shall be shown to be installed at the right-of-way at all property lines and at changes in direction. Iron pins can be installed only with concurrence of the Township Engineer where concrete monument installation is not feasible.

**LD#3932LLC – 330 SPRING MILL ROAD AND 1829 COUNTY LINE ROAD,
1835 COUNTY LINE ROAD, 1800 WEST MONTGOMERY AVENUE, VILLANOVA, WARD 6
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PLANNING COMMMISSION ON OCTOBER 6, 2025**

14. The right-of-way associated with Greenwood Court shall be dimensioned and labeled as a private road on the plans.
15. The State Route (SR) number for Spring Mill Road shall be provided on the plans.
16. The location of all existing utility services shall be provided on the plan.
17. The LDR1-Low Density Residential and IN-Institutional Zoning District boundaries shall be clearly identified on the plans. A Zoning Requirements table shall be provided for each district.

Standard Conditions of Approval

18. New legal descriptions, including metes and bounds, shall be submitted with the Final Plan for each new lot line and/or property boundary.
19. New deeds shall be recorded subsequent to the recording of the Final Plan.
20. Two copies of the revised plan shall be submitted with all changes highlighted and a letter shall be provided indicating how each requested revision has been addressed.
21. The Final Plan, complying with all applicable conditions of approval shall be filed with the Department of Building and Planning within twelve (12) months from the date of approval by the Board of Commissioners.
22. Existing buildings shall have approved address numbers, building numbers or approved building identification placed in a position that is plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting on the property. The address numbers shall be a minimum of four (4) inches (102mm) high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch (12.7mm).
23. The owner shall make payment of fees and expenses of the Township's professional consultants who perform services on behalf of the Township with respect to these plans and the work contemplated thereunder and will establish and maintain with the Township those escrows for the payment of such fees required by Township Code. Owner agrees that any statement from the Township for such fees which remain unpaid for a period of 30 days may be recorded against the property as a municipal lien.
24. The owner shall make payment of the Township Engineer's inspection fees within 30 days of presentation. A penalty of 1.5% per month will be due for late payments from the date of presentation. If any shares are not paid within 60 days of presentation, the Township may elect to suspend any outstanding permits until all pending charges are settled.
25. The property owner(s) shall comply with all applicable federal, state, county, local and Lower Merion Township ordinances and laws regardless of specific mention herein.

Staff Report

Meeting Date: November 12, 2025

TO: Building and Planning Committee

FROM: Department of Building and Planning – Holly Colello, Planner and Colleen Hall, Senior Planner

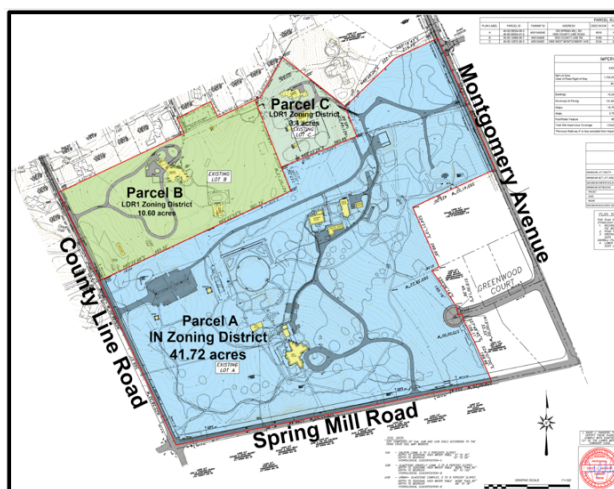
SUBJECT: Preliminary Lot Line Change/Subdivision Application - 330 Spring Mill Road & 1829 County Line Road, 1835 County Line Road, 1800 West Montgomery Avenue, (Natural Lands Trust), Villanova, Ward 6, LD# 3932LLC

PROPOSAL:

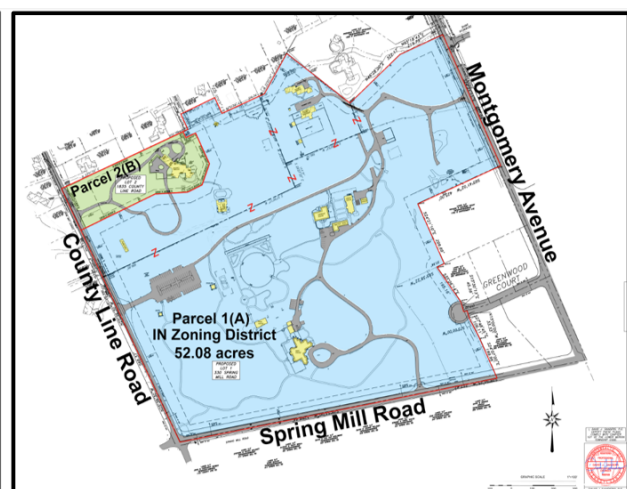
The Natural Lands Trust, (NLT), and Denise Yarnoff, (authorized agent and applicant) on behalf of Stoneleigh are proposing the expansion of Stoneleigh through a proposed subdivision that reduces the total number of parcels from three to two by consolidating land. Parcel C (1800 West Montgomery Avenue) and a portion of Parcel B (1835 County Line Road) are merged to create new Parcel 1A (330 Spring Mill Road/ 1829 County Line Road - Stoneleigh), increasing Parcel 1A from approximately 40 acres to just over 50 acres. As a result, a new Parcel 2B (1835 County Line Road) has been created and reduced in size from 10 acres to just over 3 acres and will maintain the Oakwell Mansion as a Class II Historic Resource with an entrance drive from County Line Road. No other improvements are proposed.

WAIVER REQUESTS:

- Waiver from Code §135-4.4.B(2) to create a lot which is excessively irregular.
- Wavier from Code § 135-4.9(F)(3) to defer installation of sidewalk.



EXISTING PARCELS			
Parcel	Address	Gross Acres	Net Acres
A	330 Spring Mill Road / 1829 County Line Road	41.72	39.96
B	1835 County Line Road	10.62	10.32
C	1800 West Montgomery Avenue	3.04	3.04
Total		55.38	53.32



PROPOSED PARCELS			
New Combined Parcel	Address	Gross Acres	Net Acres
1 (A)	330 Spring Mill Road + 1829 County Line Road + 1800 West Montgomery Avenue	52.08	50.08
2 (B)	1835 County Line Road	3.3	3.24
Total		55.38	53.32

SUBMISSION MATERIALS

- **Civil Plans:** Seven (7) sheets prepared by Site Engineering Concepts, LLC, dated August 28, 2025, last revised September 19, 2025.

SUMMARY OF IMPERVIOUS SURFACE CHANGES:

EXISTING - IMPERVIOUS SURFACE COVERAGE SUMMARY			
	EXISTING LOT A (IN Zoning District) 330 Spring Mill Road / 1829 County Line Road	EXISTING LOT B (LDR1 Zoning District) 1835 County Line Road	EXISTING LOT C (LDR1 Zoning District) 1800 West Montgomery Avenue
Net Lot Area	1,740,556 sq. ft.	449,337 sq. ft.	132,568 sq. ft.
Clear of Road Right-of-Way	40 acres	10.3 acres	3 acres
Buildings	19,245 sq. ft.	9,970 sq. ft.	6,646 sq. ft.
Driveways & Paving	131,629 sq. ft.	30,906 sq. ft.	11,802 sq. ft.
Walks	19,793 sq. ft.	1,175 sq. ft.	7,240 sq. ft.
Walls	3,706 sq. ft.	1,899 sq. ft.	768 sq. ft.
Pool/Water Feature	863 sq. ft.	3,764 sq. ft.	0 sq. ft.
Total Site Impervious Coverage	175,236 sq. ft. 10.1%	47,714 sq. ft. 10.6%	26,456 sq. ft. 20%
*Pervious Walkway 6' or less excluded from impervious coverage			

PROPOSED - IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE SUMMARY		
	PROPOSED LOT 1(A) (IN Zoning District) 330 Spring Mill Road / 1829 County Line Road	PROPOSED LOT 2(B) (LDR1 Zoning District) 1835 County Line Road
Net Lot Area	2,181,513 sq. ft.	140,948 sq. ft.
Clear of Road Right of Way	50.08 acres	3.24 acres
Buildings	29,389 sq. ft.	6,472 sq. ft.
Driveways & Paving	156,026 sq. ft.	18,938 sq. ft.
Walks	27,033 sq. ft.	548 sq. ft.
Walls	5651 sq. ft.	722 sq. ft.
Pool/Water Feature	4,426 sq. ft.	201 sq. ft.
Total Site Impervious Coverage	222,525 sq. ft. 10.2%	26,881 sq. ft. 19.1%
*Pervious Walkway 6' or less excluded from Impervious Coverage		

SUMMARY OF PARCEL CHANGES:

1. **Parcel Consolidation:**
 - o Existing: Three parcels (A, B, and C).
 - o Proposed: Reduced to two parcels (1A and 2B).
 - o Change: Parcel C (1800 West Montgomery Ave) has been eliminated through consolidation, with its land area merged into Parcel 1 being Stoneleigh.
2. **New Parcel 1(A): 330 Spring Mill Rd + 1829 County Line Rd + 1800 West Montgomery Ave – Stoneleigh**

- o Existing:
 - Parcel A: 41.72 acres net 39.96 acres
 - Parcel C: 3.04 acres net 3.04 acres
 - Combined: ~44.76 acres net 43.0 acres
- o Proposed: 52.08 acres gross (50.08 net)
- o Change: Net increase of ~7 acres due to consolidation and lot line adjustment).

3. New Parcel 2(B): 1835 County Line Rd – Single Family Residential Home

- o Existing: 10.62 acres gross (10.32 net)
- o Proposed: 3.30 acres gross (3.24 net)

CONSIDERATIONS:

1. ESTATE PRESERVATION LOT:

An Estate Preservation Lot is defined as a parcel of at least (≥ 25 acres) contiguous acres with frontage on a primary, secondary, or tertiary streets that is regulated under the “Institutional / Environmental” District provisions of Zoning Code §155-4.4. These lots are intended to ensure the long-term protection of large estate properties while allowing for limited, preservation-oriented uses. Permitted uses include the preservation, management, or enhancement of land for outdoor passive recreation or scenic enjoyment for the public, provided a conservation easement is approved and recorded. They may also include the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures and associated buildings for purposes such as historical, environmental, horticultural, cultural, arts, genealogical, or musical activities, provided the main historic structure is guaranteed for permanent preservation. The establishment of an Estate Preservation Lot requires the recording of a conservation easement and adherence to the dimensional and design standards of the Institutional District. No use shall be permitted on an Estate Preservation Lot except in strict conformity with the terms of the recorded conservation easement and the applicable provisions of the Township’s Zoning Code.

- Staff has drafted a condition of approval for the Tentative Sketch Land Development Plan requiring the applicant to work with the Township Solicitor to clarify whether the proposed conservation easement will apply solely to the existing Stoneleigh property or be expanded to include the adjacent lands proposed for rezoning and consolidation. The condition states: “The applicant shall record a covenant, in a form acceptable to the Township Solicitor, guaranteeing that the property shall be perpetually maintained as an Estate Preservation Lot. A draft of the covenant shall be submitted with the Preliminary Plan application for review and approval by the Township.”
- o The property is technically not yet zoned IN, which the Estate Preservation lot requirement is applicable. In the Tentative Sketch plan the proposal shows the lands being utilized as an Estate Preservation Lot for the expanded area in the Lot Line Change. Staff believes that this condition is appropriate with the Tentative Sketch.

2. WAIVER REQUEST FROM SALDO CODE §135-4.4.B.(2):

The applicant has requested relief from [SALDO Code §135-4.4.B\(2\)- Lots](#): To create a lot which is excessively irregular because it will have more than four sides.

This code section reads:

B. Lot depth, side lines and irregular configuration.

(2) A lot may not be created which is excessively irregular unless reasonably dictated by the topography of the land, other natural feature, or the existing configuration of an adjacent lot. An excessively irregular lot is one which is not four-sided or which has a boundary line the length of which is more than 2.5 times the length of the opposite or adjacent boundary line.

Applicants Burden:

- In compliance with the SALDO Code, applicants must provide a justification for any requested waiver and submit an alternative design that demonstrates comparable or improved results. The applicant has submitted the following justification to meet this requirement:
 - *“Waiver is requested to create a lot whose depth is 600 feet which is slightly greater than 2.5 times its width and is not completely 4 sided. The SALDO allows for “excessively irregular lots” under certain circumstances and we respectfully suggest this is not “excessive”. To the extent the Township considers the proposed lot configuration to be excessive, the SADLO does allow for it (but does not necessarily require a waiver) if the irregularity is reasonably dictated by the topography of the land, other natural features, or the existing configuration of an adjacent lot. Note that the proposed configuration allows more of the sensitive natural resources such as heritage trees to be on the Stoneleigh lot in the care of professionals who have the expertise to manage them. In addition, the proposed configuration attempts to create lots as close to conforming with the zoning requirements as reasonably appropriate for the proposed uses of each lot. Moreover, to the extent that straight boundary lines are intended to avoid property neighbor disputes, NL could add fencing or permanent and visible markers to show the precise boundary lines. Accordingly, to the extent that a waiver is required, based on Waiver Section 135-1.6 – an alternative standard such as being requested here which provides equal results, is a reasonable exception, will not be contrary to the public interest and is the minimum modification necessary to achieve the results meets the requirements to obtain a waiver.”*

Township Response:

- Staff notes that if the proposed lot line change is approved it will not permit future subdivision of 1835 County Line Road and that the future subdivision of this parcel will also secure additional preserved open space to be conveyed to Stoneleigh. Although the adjustment results in an irregularly shaped lot, this configuration directly supports open space protection and advances the Township’s broader preservation objectives in the Comprehensive Plans. Staff recommends approval of the requested waiver.

3. WAIVER REQUEST FROM SALDO CODE §135-4.9(3):

The applicant has requested relief from [SALDO Code section 135-4.9\(F\)\(3\)](#) – Complete streets and context sensitive design: To defer the installations of sidewalks per 135-4.9(F)(3) along County Line Road and Montgomery Avenue.

Applicants Burden:

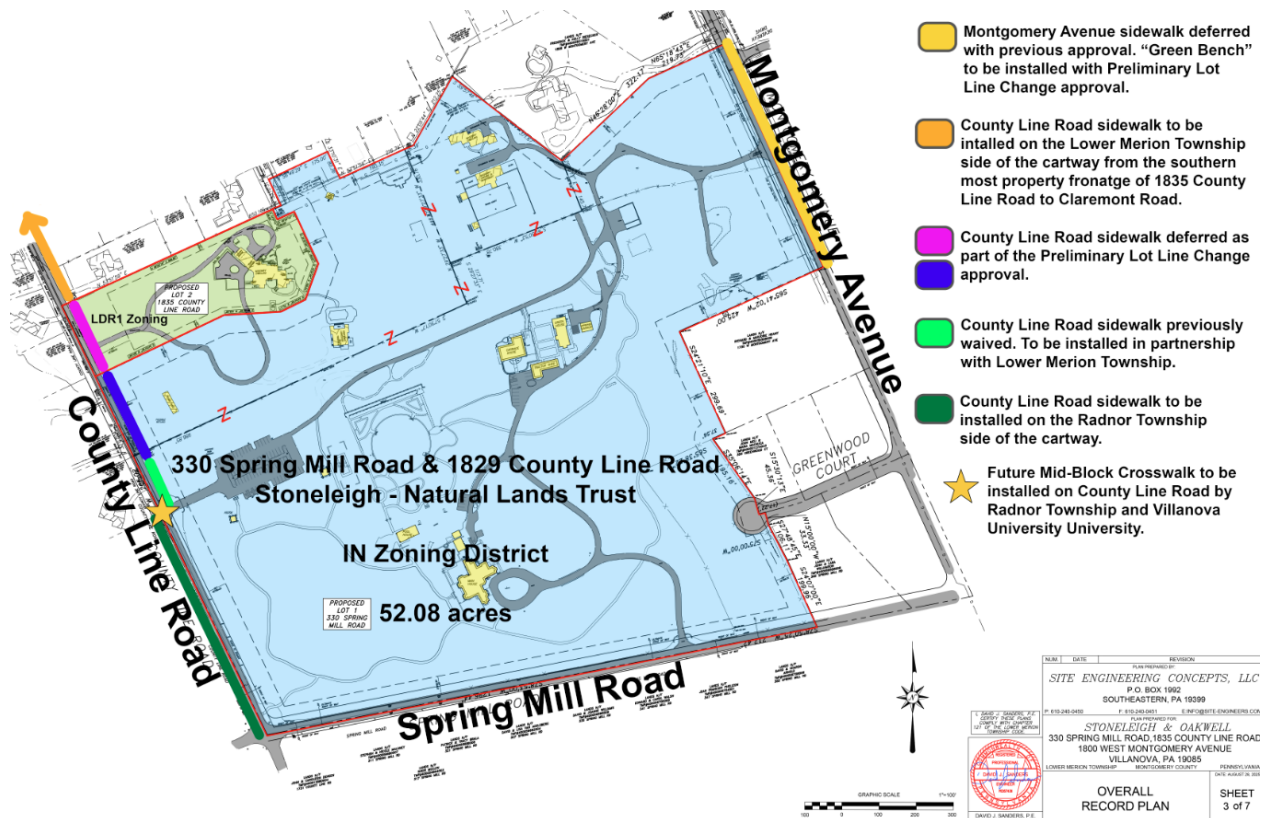
- In compliance with the SALDO Code, applicants must provide a justification for any requested waiver and submit an alternative design that demonstrates comparable or improved results. The applicant has submitted the following justification to meet this requirement:
 - *“Radnor Township and Villanova are installing sidewalk on County Line Road and a cross walk to the entrance of Stoneleigh. We understand that Lower Merion Township is planning on adding sidewalk from Stoneleigh entrance to Clairemont. The frontage along Montgomery Avenue is 660 feet and a sidewalk along that frontage does not connect on either side of the Stoneleigh property to sidewalk and there is no public entrance to Stoneleigh from Montgomery Avenue. Stoneleigh currently provides 1.5 miles of sidewalk/pathway and will be adding additional sidewalk/pathway through Stoneleigh with these applications and the purchase of the Oakwell parcels. NL would be agreeable to installing a green bench along Montgomery until such time as appropriate to add sidewalk and would provide a public easement as necessary to use such green bench although there are no immediate connections on either side. To the extent a waiver is required, we believe that we meet the standards for a waiver in the SALDO (provides equal results, is a reasonable exception, will not be contrary to the public interest and is the minimum modification necessary).”*

Township Response:

Staff notes that in 2015 the Board of Commissioners granted approval of several SALDO waivers for the properties identified as 330 Spring Mill Road, 350, 351 and 357 Greenwood Court, and 1829 County Line Road (Stoneleigh/Haas Estate), Villanova. The approved waivers included:

- §135-28.A, waiving the installation of a sidewalk along County Line Road and Spring Mill Road;
 - and §135-28.A, deferring the installation of a sidewalk along Montgomery Avenue.
- There has been increased interest from surrounding neighbors (and throughout the entire Township) towards improving pedestrian mobility since Stoneleigh was approved in 2015. Lower Merion Township is actively collaborating with Natural Lands Trust, Radnor Township, and Villanova University to implement enhanced pedestrian connections along County Line Road. The proposed project will include a sidewalk on the Villanova side of County Line Road to a point opposite the driveway to Stoneleigh where a mid-block crosswalk will connect to a sidewalk on the Lower Merion Township side of County Line Road to Claremont Road. This multi-municipal project will require multiple funding sources and be implemented over several years. The anticipated Lower Merion funded project includes sidewalks on the existing portion of Stoneleigh from the driveway to Oakwell and on the residential properties between Oakwell and Claremont Road. The portion of the project on the existing Oakwell property was not waived as part of the original Stoneleigh approval and is required as part of this subdivision. Staff recommends that this sidewalk segment be the financial responsibility of Stoneleigh and any future owner of Oakwell, but installation be deferred until a complete sidewalk can be implemented between Claremont Road and the Stoneleigh driveway. Staff supports the applicant’s alternative as an interim measure until a complete sidewalk can be constructed along Montgomery Avenue.
 - Staff also notes that pedestrian activity has increased in this area since the construction of Black Rock Middle School. The Township installed sidewalks on Montgomery Avenue between Claremont Road and Black Rock when the new middle school was constructed. Staff recommends that the Sidewalk Committee of the Board of Commissioners review the potential for extending the sidewalk along Montgomery Avenue from Claremont Road to Stoneleigh and requiring the construction of the previously deferred sidewalks along the Montgomery Avenue frontage of Stoneleigh.

- o The following is a graphic representation of the different sidewalk segments explained above.



4. RESPONSE TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION (MCPC) COMMENTS:

The Montgomery County Planning Commission is generally supportive of the application, although they offered the following comments.

- The County identified that there are zoning requirements that an Estate Preservation Lot include a conservation easement and noted that after the subdivision that the existing conservation easement over Stoneleigh should be extended over the additional lands transferred from Oakwell. This item is required when the property is proposed for use as an estate preservation lot, which will occur with the Tentative Sketch Plan. As noted above, a condition has been added to that approval which requires submission of the updated conservation easement with the Preliminary Plan submission.
- Accessory Structure Setback. The "pool" in the side yard setback identified in the county letter is actually a small natural pond, not a pool. The zoning officer has determined that a natural pond does not have to be removed from the setback.
- Irregular Lot Lines: The County concerns are itemed through the waiver and are discussed further in the memo above.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Provide a recommendation on the Preliminary Lot Line Change Plan.

The Planning Commission voted favorably to approve the Preliminary Lot Line Change.

2. Provide a recommendation on the two (2) SALDO Waivers.

- SALDO Code section 135-4.4.B(2): To create a lot which is excessively irregular.

The Planning Commission voted to approve the waiver.

- SALDO Code section 135-4.9(F)(3): To defer the installations of sidewalks along County Line Road.

The Planning Commission did not support the waiver to defer the installation of sidewalk along County Line Road. The Commission recommended that the sidewalks be installed along all frontages (County Line Road, Spring Mill Road & Montgomery Avenue) that was not previously waived through the previous land development.

Staff Report

Meeting Date: November 12, 2025

TO: Building and Planning Committee

FROM: Department of Building and Planning – Colleen Hall, Senior Planner and Holly Colello, Planner

SUBJECT: Background Information – 330 Spring Mill Road & 1829 County Line Road, 1835 County Line Road, 1800 West Montgomery Avenue, Natural Lands Trust, Villanova, Ward 6, 3932LLC, Z-25-005, and 3933TS.

PROPOSAL:

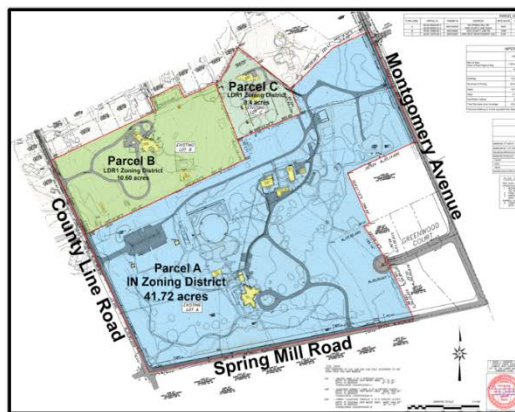
The Natural Lands Trust, (NLT), and Denise Yarnoff, (authorized agent and applicant) on behalf of Stoneleigh is seeking approval of three (3) separate, but interrelated, land development applications to:

1. Merge part of the Oakwell Estate into the Stoneleigh Nature Preserve,
2.
 - a. Rezone the merged lands from LDR1 (single-family residential) to IN (Institutional Nature Preserve),
 - b. Modify the Institutional Nature Preserve Use provisions and
3. Make Land Development improvements to integrate the merged area into Stoneleigh.

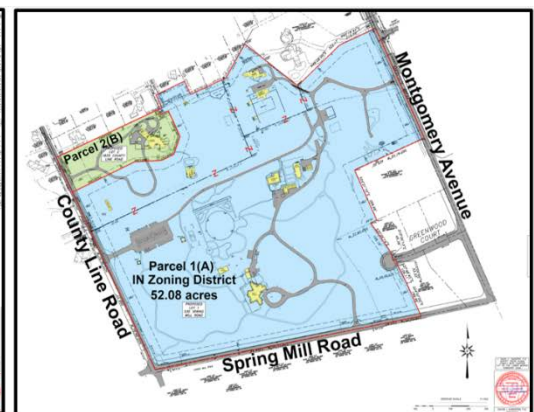
Each application involves a separate code section, and each application requires individual review and approval. This memo was prepared to explain that separate actions are part of a larger project to preserve the Oakwell Estate and to expand the Stoneleigh preserve. The Building and Planning Committee is scheduled to consider each of the items (alongside a Conditional Use request to amend existing Conditional Use conditions of approval reviewed by the Planning Commission last month) at the November meeting.

Application #1 - Preliminary Lot Line Change:

- The purpose of the proposed subdivision plan is to expand the grounds of Stoneleigh, a public garden, and to preserve the Oakwell Estate by transferring parts of Oakwell to Stoneleigh. Currently, Oakwell is comprised of two separate lots, 1835 County Line Road (A) and 1800 West Montgomery Avenue (B) acres. Stoneleigh is a single lot (C). The result of the subdivision will be two lots: a smaller Oakwell (1A) and a larger Stoneleigh (2B). No other improvements are proposed with this application.



EXISTING PARCELS			
Parcel	Address	Gross Acres	Net Acres
A	330 Spring Mill Road / 1829 County Line Road	41.72	39.96
B	1835 County Line Road	10.62	10.32
C	1800 West Montgomery Avenue	3.04	3.04
Total		55.38	53.32



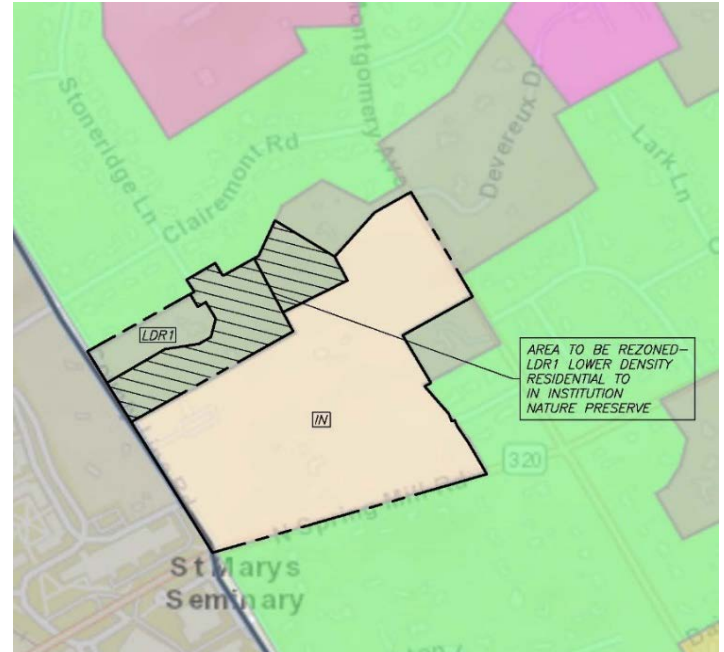
PROPOSED PARCELS			
New Combined Parcel	Address	Gross Acres	Net Acres
1 (A)	330 Spring Mill Road + 1829 County Line Road + 1800 West Montgomery Avenue	52.08	50.08
2 (B)	1835 County Line Road	3.3	3.24
Total		55.38	53.32

Application #2 - Rezoning Petition, Map Change to Rezone former Oakwell lands transferred to Stoneleigh to IN and a Text Amendment to the IN Use provisions:

- This request has two components.

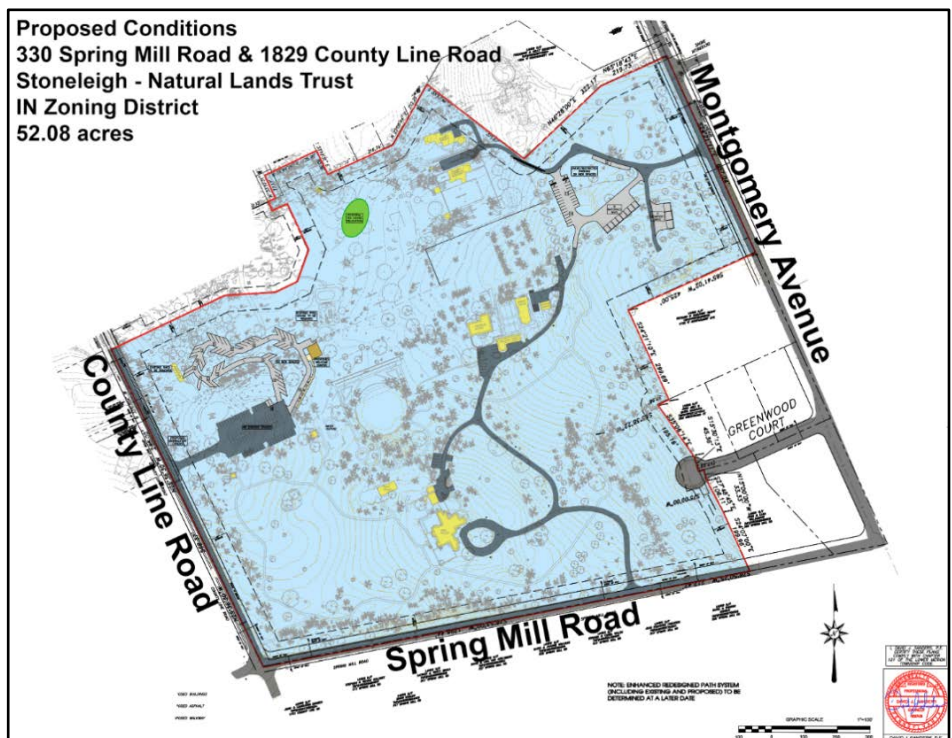
The first action involves a Zoning Map Change to rezone the land transferred from Oakwell to Stoneleigh as (IN) Institutional Nature Preserve. Oakwell is currently zoned LDR1. Stoneleigh is currently zoned IN. Lands transferred from one property to another via subdivision do not automatically absorb the zoning of their new parcel. For the transferred land to be used by Stoneleigh as a public garden the zoning map must be redrawn.

The second action involves a Text Amendment modifying Article V, Uses, Table 5.3 for the (IN) Institutional Nature Preserve District to allow greater flexibility for institutional operations, provide better accommodations for visitors, and to allow additional community/educational events.



Application #3 - Tentative Sketch Land Development:

- The applicant proposes improvements to the Stoneleigh public garden, including the removal of the pool house and pool formerly located on the Oakwell Estate, construction of small Welcome Center and garden plaza and construction of fifty (50) additional parking spaces.
- The plans also show the relocation of an existing historic Tea House, and enhancements to walkways. It should be noted that the Tea House brick wall along the property line is not proposed to be relocated.



PROPERTY DESCRIPTION & HISTORY:

Property Description

Stoneleigh occupies 41.7-acres and is zoned IN Institutional Nature Preserve. The property has frontage on Montgomery Avenue, Spring Mill Road and County Line Road. The opposite side of County Line Road is occupied by Villanova University, which is in Radnor Township, Delaware County. On the Lower Merion side of County Line Road Stoneleigh is bordered by low-density single-family homes zoned LDR1 & LDR2. Stoneleigh includes a public garden established in 2015. The gardens and grounds are maintained by Natural Lands and are utilized for passive recreation as well as educational and cultural events. The mansion is utilized by the headquarters of the Organ Historical Society.

The existing Oakwell property is comprised of two parcels, 1835 County Line Road (10.6 acres) and 1800 West Montgomery Avenue (3.0) acres. 1835 County Line Road includes the Oakwell mansion and grounds. 1800 West Montgomery Avenue includes several out buildings.

History

The Tudor revival Stoneleigh mansion was originally built between 1877-1890 by Edmund C. Smith, Vice President of the Pennsylvania Railroad Co., and was subsequently owned by Samuel T. Bodine, Vice President of United Gas Improvement Company, who named the estate Stoneleigh. The main house was designed and constructed by the Wilson Brothers firm and alterations were subsequently introduced in 1901 by architect Guy King. The property is listed on the Lower Merion Historic Resource Inventory as a Class II Historic Resource. The property contains several formal gardens for which the Olmstead Brothers served as landscape architects from 1900 until 1913. In 2016, the Haas family donated Stoneleigh to Natural Lands for public enjoyment and to nurture and enhance the natural beauty of the community resource.

- Both properties at Oakwell were originally part of the Stoneleigh estate, constructed during the ownership of Samuel T. Bodine. The Tudor mansion at **1835 County Line Road**, called “Oakwell,” was built ca. 1922 from a design by architect William Wayne, Jr. It was the home of Samuel’s son William W. Bodine. As with the rest of the Bodine family estate, the landscaping around the mansion was designed by Olmsted Brothers. One freestanding garden structure, called the “tea house” on historic landscape plans, ended up on the 1835 County Line Road property when the estate was subdivided.



1800 West Montgomery Avenue contains structures relating to Stoneleigh’s agricultural operations. The buildings, walls, and other elements were designed by Frank Miles Day & Brother to fit within the larger landscape plan designed by Olmsted Brothers. The intact elements of the property include the superintendent’s cottage, various brick walls, and a group of small buildings associated with the operations of the greenhouse. A majority of the footprint of the former greenhouse has been replaced by a tennis court, though a small portion of an original greenhouse remains. The property is a good example of the architecture of Frank Miles Day, whose work includes three Class II-designated resources on the Township’s Historic Resource Inventory and a wide variety of notable buildings in the Philadelphia area. When new, the garden complex was considered significant enough to merit a five-page article in a 1903 issue of “House and Garden” magazine. The article described the architecture glowingly: “That [utilitarian] buildings can be made objects of beauty and also an attraction of the estate is shown... Here is an ingenious grouping of not only the greenhouses themselves, but of all their accompaniments, including the horses and teams engaged upon the garden work. All of this is enclosed within distinctly defined boundaries to which are added details of a charming architectural character.”



1800 W. Montgomery Avenue: Historic photo of the greenhouse complex



1800 W. Montgomery: Current photo of the greenhouse complex

ADDITIONAL REVIEWS:

Rosemont/Villanova Civic Association: Plans were reviewed at the September 10, 2025 civic association meeting with comments, but no formal action was taken. The applicant has scheduled another meeting with the Civic Association in October, with any formal comments to accompany Planning Commission recommendations from the subject Tentative Sketch Land Development plan in November.

MEETING SCHEDULE & PROCESS:

The *tentative* schedule for the Applicant’s request are as follows:

Previous	Monday, September 8, 2025	Planning Commission	Review of the Conditional Use Application
	Thursday, September 25, 2025	Conditional Use Hearing	
➔	Monday, October 6, 2025	Planning Commission	Review of the Preliminary Lot Line Change and Petition for Rezoning Request
UPCOMING	Wednesday, October 15, 2025	Building & Planning Committee	Authorization to Advertise the Petition for Rezoning Request
	Monday, November 3, 2025	Planning Commission	Review of the Tentative Sketch Land Development
	Wednesday, November 12, 2025	Building & Planning Committee	Review of All requested Applications
	Wednesday, November 19, 2025	Board of Commissioners	

Additional information about the Township’s Land Development approval process is illustrated in the [Subdivision & Land Development Flowchart](#). This application is currently in the *Stage 4: Public Meetings* portion of the process.



**TOWNSHIP
OF
LOWER MERION**
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

75 E. Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, PA 19003 2376
Telephone: (610) 645-6200
www.lowermerion.org

LOWM 256.75

September 29, 2025

Christopher Leswing, Director of Building and Planning
Township of Lower Merion
75 East Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, PA 19003

**Re: 330 Spring Mill Road, 1835 County Line Road
Lot Line Change Plan Review**

Dear Mr. Leswing:

In accordance with your request for the referenced submission, we have reviewed a set of seven (7) plans dated 08-28-25, last revised 09-19-25, prepared by Site Engineering Concepts, LLC. The plans show a lot line reconfiguration for the Stoneleigh property and Oakwell property. We offer the following comments for your consideration:

A. MAJOR ENGINEERING ISSUES

- ❖ **Lot Configuration** – The proposed boundary for Lot 2 results in an irregular lot configuration. Unless it can be clearly demonstrated that existing natural features or site constraints necessitate this irregularity, the boundary should be revised to establish a more regular lot layout. Additionally, the locations of all existing utility infrastructure, including sanitary sewer laterals and/or on-lot disposal systems, must be identified to confirm that these facilities remain entirely within the lot they are intended to serve.

Since there are no major engineering issues, with the resolution of the following items in this letter, we recommend that the Lot Line Change Plan be approved.

B. ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Section 135-4.4(B)—Proposed Lot 2 is shown to be irregular. A lot may not be created which is excessively irregular unless reasonably dictated by the topography of the land, other natural features, or the existing configuration of an adjacent lot.
2. Section 135-4.9(A)—Five feet wide sidewalks are required when a land development application is submitted.
3. Section 135-4.9—The minimum right-of-way width for Spring Mill Road and Montgomery Avenue shall be eighty (80') feet.
4. Section 135-4.10(B)—A Sewage Facilities Planning Module or waiver of planning must be approved by DEP prior to recording the Final Plan.
5. Section 135-4.10(B)—The sanitary sewer lateral connection to the public main or on-lot sewer system shall be shown for each property.

6. Section 135-4.10—The location of all existing utility services shall be provided on the plan.
7. Section 155-1.1(D) —The LDR1-Low Density Residential and IN-Institutional Zoning District boundaries shall be clearly identified on the plans. A Zoning Requirements table shall be provided for each district.
8. Section 155-3.4(D) —The proposed use of the buildings on Lot B and C shall be noted on the plans. The Zoning Officer shall confirm that the proposed building occupation is consistent with the use requirements for the zoning district.

C. ENGINEERING COMMENTS

1. The plans shall be signed and sealed by a licensed surveyor.
2. Concrete road control monuments must be shown to be installed at the right-of-way at all property lines and at changes in direction. Iron pins can be installed only with concurrence of the Township Engineer where concrete monument installation is not feasible.
3. The right-of-way associated with Greenwood Court shall be dimensioned and labeled as a private road on the plans.
4. The State Route (SR) number for Spring Mill Road shall be provided on the plans.

Please advise if we may be of further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph A. Mastronardo, P.E.

PENNONI ASSOCIATES

Township Engineer

cc: Colleen Hall, Senior Planner
Angela Forney, Planning Technician
Site Engineering Concepts, LLC

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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 30, 2025

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

Re: MCPC #25-0188-001
Plan Name: Stoneleigh and Oakwell Subdivision
(2 lots on approximately 53.3 acres)
Situate: Spring Mill Road (north)/east of County Line Road
Lower Merion Township

Dear Mr. Leswing:

We have reviewed the above-referenced subdivision plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on September 18, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Natural Lands Trust, Inc., proposes to subdivide off an approximately 7.1-acre portion of the property at 1835 County Line Road and then consolidate that portion, along with the entire property at 1800 West Montgomery Avenue, with the existing Stoneleigh property. An existing dwelling on Proposed Lot 2 is proposed to remain. No additional improvements are shown as part of the subdivision application. The property is located partially in the LDR1 Low-Density Residential and IN Institutional Nature Preserve zoning districts; however, it is our understanding that the applicant has also submitted a request to consider rezoning the lands proposed to be consolidated as IN Institutional Nature Preserve.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The Land Use Element of the 2016 Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan identifies these properties as Low & Medium Density Residential (1835 County Line Road and 1800 West Montgomery Avenue) and Other Private Open Space (Stoneleigh) in the Future Land Use Map. The proposed subdivision will facilitate the transfer of additional land to be incorporated into Stoneleigh as a public nature preserve, thereby maintaining its current residential character, while ensuring the maintenance of natural and historic



features on the site. In addition, this property is identified as Suburban Residential Area (1835 County Line Road and 1800 West Montgomery Avenue) and Open Space (Stoneleigh) in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*. Institutional uses are considered primary uses in Suburban Residential Areas, which are also characterized by extensive landscaping on individual properties.

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 moving forward. Our review comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

ZONING ORDINANCE COMMENTS

We have identified the following comments related to the township's zoning ordinance:

- A. Estate Preservation Lot. Table 5.3 requires a conservation easement be approved and recorded for the estate preservation lot to qualify for certain environmental (nature preserve) uses in the IN Institutional Nature Preserve zoning district. It is unclear from the information provided if the conservation easement that currently applies to the Stoneleigh property would be expanded to include the adjacent lands that are proposed to be rezoned and consolidated with the existing Stoneleigh property.
- B. Accessory Structure Setback. Table 4.1.1 states that the minimum side yard setback for accessory structures in the LDR1 Low-Density Residential zoning district is 10 feet. An existing pool on Proposed Lot 2 appears to be located within the required accessory structure setback area, therefore plan revisions or a zoning variance may be needed.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE COMMENTS

Section 135-4.4.B.(1) of the township's subdivision and land development ordinance states that, "a lot may not be created whose depth is greater than 2.5 times its width." In addition, §135-4.4.B.(2) states that, "a lot may not be created which is excessively irregular [...]. An excessively irregular lot is one which is not four-sided or which has a boundary line the length of which is more than 2.5 times the length of the opposite or adjacent boundary line." Proposed Lot 2 will be irregular both because of its proposed ratio of lot depth to lot width and because it will have more than four sides (nine sides are proposed).

UTILITY EASEMENTS

Sheet 2 of 7 shows the locations of existing utilities, some of which will cross across the proposed new property lines. For example, it appears that an existing water line from Stone Ridge Road to the existing dwelling proposed to remain on Proposed Lot 2 will now cross through Proposed Lot 1. In addition, it appears that an existing water line from the existing dwelling on Proposed Lot 2 will now cross into Proposed Lot 1 to connect to an existing pool house. Future plan submissions should provide additional information on which utility connections are proposed to remain and any additional utility easements, as necessary.

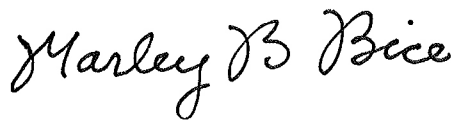
CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the proposed subdivision; however, we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve the township's planning objectives for residential and institutional 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 (#25-0188-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



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

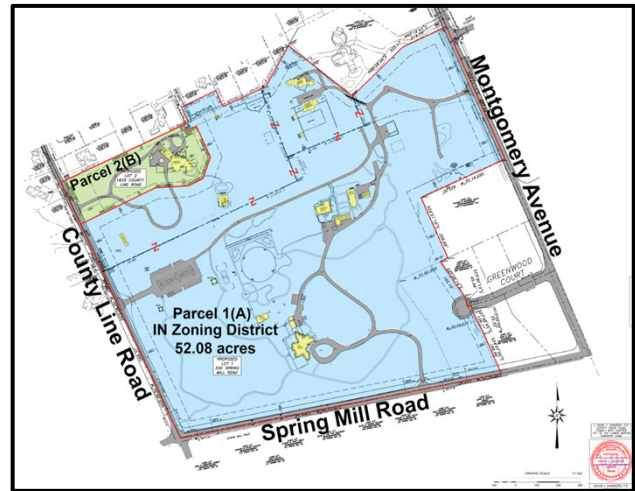
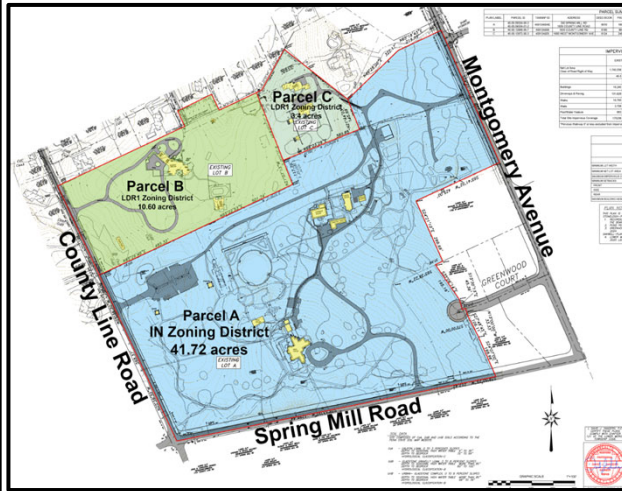
c: Denise Yanoff, Applicant's Engineer
Gilbert P. High, Jr., Esq., Twp. Solicitor
Ernie B. McNeely, Twp. Manager
Jody Kelley, Twp. Secretary
Joseph Mastronardo, P.E., Twp. Engineer
Charlie Doyle, Twp. Asst. Dir. of Planning
Colleen Hall, Twp. Senior Planner
Greg Prichard, Twp. Hist. Preserv. Planner
Holly Colello, Twp. Planner
Sarah Carley, Twp. Planner
Angela Forney, Twp. Planning Technician

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

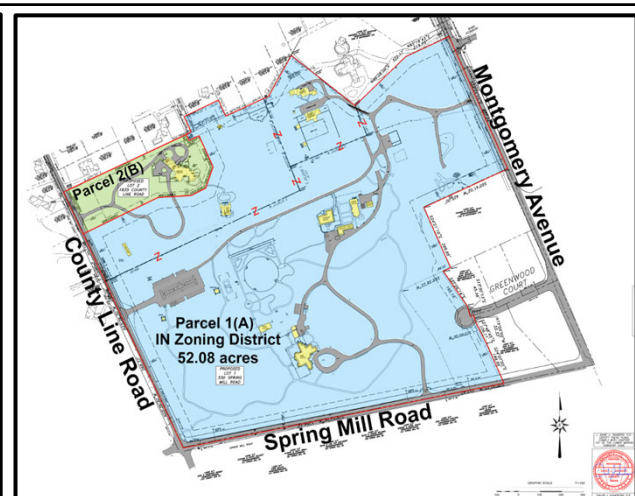
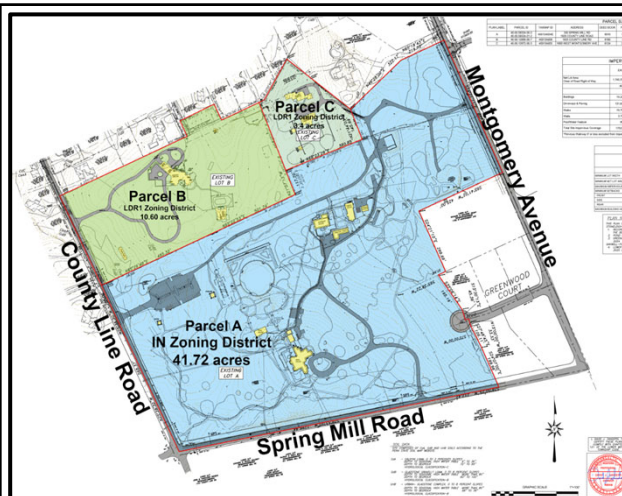
330 Spring Mill Rd & 1829 County Line Rd, 1835 County Line Rd, 1800 West Montgomery Ave,
(Natural Lands Trust), Villanova, Ward 6

Application No. 3932LLC

Preliminary Lot Line Change/Subdivision Application



1



EXISTING PARCELS			
Parcel	Address	Gross Acres	Net Acres
A	330 Spring Mill Road / 1829 County Line Road	41.72	39.96
B	1835 County Line Road	10.62	10.32
C	1800 West Montgomery Avenue	3.04	3.04
Total		55.38	53.32

PROPOSED PARCELS			
New Combined Parcel	Address	Gross Acres	Net Acres
1 (A)	330 Spring Mill Road + 1829 County Line Road + 1800 West Montgomery Avenue	52.08	50.08
2 (B)	1835 County Line Road	3.3	3.24
Total		55.38	53.32

2



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Building & Planning

ITEM: **TENTATIVE SKETCH PLAN - 330 SPRING MILL ROAD & 1829 COUNTY LINE ROAD, 1835 COUNTY LINE ROAD, 1800 WEST MONTGOMERY AVENUE, (NATURAL LANDS TRUST), VILLANOVA, WARD 6, LD# 3933TS**

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners approval of a Tentative Sketch Plan. The Plan shows improvements to Stoneleigh, a natural garden open to the public as a conservation resource since 2015. Improvements to the Stoneleigh property include the removal of an existing pool house and pool, construction of a small Welcome Center and garden plaza with 50 additional parking spaces connected to the existing 66 spaces accessed from County Line Road, and the addition of 29 event-restricted parking spaces along the existing driveway from West Montgomery Avenue. The plans also show the potential relocation of the existing historic tea house, and enhancements to the design of both existing and proposed walkways.

The applicant is requesting the following waiver from the Township Code:

- § 135-4.9(F)(3) to defer installation of sidewalk.

On November 3, 2025, the Planning Commission recommended approval subject to the conditions shown on the following pages.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Natural Lands Trust - LD Plan - Conditions of Approval](#)

[Natural Lands Trust - LD Plan - Issues Memo](#)

[Natural Lands Trust - LD Plan - TE Review](#)

[Natural Lands Trust - LD Plan - MCPC Review](#)

[Natural Lands Trust - LD Plan - Slides](#)

**LD#3933TS – 330 SPRING MILL ROAD AND 1829 COUNTY LINE ROAD, VILLANOVA, WARD 6
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PLANNING COMMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2025**

Land Development #: 3933TS
Address and Ward: 330 Spring Mill Road and 1829 County Line Road, Villanova, Ward 6
Expiration Date: December 7, 2025
Zoning District: IN
Applicant / Owner: Denise Yarnoff on behalf of Natural Lands Trust

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners approval of a Tentative Sketch Land Development application. The Plan dated August 28, 2025, last revised September 19, 2025, prepared by Site Engineering Concepts, LLC., shows improvements to Stoneleigh, the public garden of the non-profit Natural Lands Trust, including the removal of the existing pool house and pool, on the previous Oakwell property, construction of new small Welcome Center and garden plaza with fifty (50) additional parking spaces connected to the existing 66 spaces accessed from County Line Road, and the addition of twenty-nine (29) event-restricted parking spaces along the existing driveway from West Montgomery Avenue. The plans also shall the potential relocation of the existing historic tea house, and enhancements to the design of both existing and proposed walkways.

In addition, the Applicant requested the following waivers from the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance:

- A. §135-4.9(F)(3) To defer the installation of sidewalks along County Line Road; and
- B. §135-4.9(F)(3) To defer the installation of sidewalks along Montgomery Avenue.

On November 3, 2025, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Plan and requested code waivers subject to the following conditions:

Township Engineer's Review

1. The Township Engineer's review letter dated October 27, 2025, shall be incorporated by reference into these conditions of approval to the extent the same is not consistent with these conditions of approval.

Zoning

2. The Zoning Officer shall approve the number and tabulation of the final parking demand schedule.

Fire Department & Traffic Safety Unit

3. The applicant shall work with the Township's Fire Department and Traffic Safety Unit to clarify/establish site access for emergency dispatch purposes.
4. The applicant shall work with the township Fire Department to ensure proposed drive aisles meet minimum fire code requirements.

LD#3933TS – 330 SPRING MILL ROAD AND 1829 COUNTY LINE ROAD, VILLANOVA, WARD 6
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Electric Vehicle Standards

5. The applicant shall meet the requirements of SALDO code section 135-4.9.R. for electric vehicle charging stations and infrastructure to accommodate electric vehicle charging as part of their proposed development.

Landscape and Wetland

6. The applicant shall identify trees to be removed or impacted with a red X or red triangle on the civil plans.
7. The applicant shall ensure that a code compliant vegetated buffer is provided between the parcel in the IN District and the LDR2 zoning district with any future landscape submissions.
8. The applicant shall connect the proposed parking lot to trail/path network from the proposed welcome center to the existing sixty-six (66) parking spaces.
9. A Planting Plan shall be submitted with the Preliminary Plan and must be approved by the Planning Department and the Township Arborist.
10. Wetland delineation report shall be submitted with the Preliminary Plan. Any identified wetlands shall be delineated on all sheets of the civil and landscape Preliminary Plan submission.
11. The applicant shall comply with SALDO code section 135-4.7.D(2) and provide a twenty-five-foot "wetland buffer" setback which shall be maintained around the perimeter of all wetlands on the Preliminary Land Development Plans.

Stormwater & Utilities

12. Erosion control measures shall be provided with the preliminary plans. The proposed construction access location shall be indicated. Details that conform to township standards shall be shown.
13. The location, size, material, and slope of proposed sanitary laterals shall be shown. The sanitary sewer connection to the existing building shall be provided.
14. The applicant shall provide stormwater calculations and plans showing compliance, which must be approved by the Township Engineer before any grading or building permits are issued.

Pedestrian Circulation & Sidewalks

15. The Applicant shall demonstrate compliance with SALDO §135-4.9.Q.(7) regarding pedestrian pathways and crosswalks for all surface parking lots with 10 or more new spaces. Future site plans must clearly show how pedestrians will safely travel from the far end of each parking lot to the main building entry.

LD#3933TS – 330 SPRING MILL ROAD AND 1829 COUNTY LINE ROAD, VILLANOVA, WARD 6
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
PLANNING COMMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2025

16. The applicant shall revise future plan submissions to comply with the intent of Table 4.9.1 – Road Design Standards by constructing a future 4-foot-wide sidewalk to Township specifications along the Montgomery Avenue frontage. In lieu of the standard 8-foot sidewalk and 4-foot verge, the applicant may consider utilizing the off-road pedestrian pathway standards outlined in §135-4.9.F.(3)(b), subject to the review and approval of the Township Engineer and the Public Works Department.

Architecture

17. Architectural elevations and renderings of all sides of the proposed welcome center and all accessory structures shall be submitted with the Preliminary Land Development Plans, including all materials listed and keyed to the elevations.
18. The applicant shall provide the potential relocation of the tea house and any associated pathways that need to be constructed or relocated shall be shown on the plan.

Lighting Plan

19. If any new lighting is proposed, a lighting plan shall be submitted with the Preliminary Plan. The location, luminaire type, wattage, pole height and illumination patterns shall be indicated. The lighting shall be designed to reduce the off-site transmission of light, to shield the source of illumination and to prevent glare on adjacent properties.

Plan Drafting

20. A profile for the proposed looped parking area leading to the welcome center shall be provided. Maneuverability diagrams for the proposed parking configuration shall be provided.
21. The State Route (SR) number for Spring Mill Road shall be provided on the plans.
22. The location of all existing utility services shall be provided on the plan.

Standard Conditions of Approval

23. Approval of this Tentative Sketch Plan does not ensure that the developer or the owner can ultimately develop the property as shown on the plan. The proposed development's compliance with various Township ordinances, including but not limited to the Natural Features Conservation Code shall not be determined until the applicant submits a Preliminary Plan for Township approval.
24. Two copies of the revised plan shall be submitted with all changes highlighted and a letter shall be provided indicating how each requested revision has been addressed.
25. The Preliminary Plan, complying with all applicable conditions of approval shall be filed with the Department of Building and Planning within twelve (12) months from the date of approval by the Board of Commissioners.

LD#3933TS – 330 SPRING MILL ROAD AND 1829 COUNTY LINE ROAD, VILLANOVA, WARD 6
CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE
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26. The owner shall make payment of fees and expenses of the Township's professional consultants who perform services on behalf of the Township with respect to these plans and the work contemplated thereunder and will establish and maintain with the Township those escrows for the payment of such fees required by Township Code. Owner agrees that any statement from the Township for such fees which remain unpaid for a period of 30 days may be recorded against the property as a municipal lien.
27. The owner shall make payment of the Township Engineer's inspection fees within 30 days of presentation. A penalty of 1.5% per month will be due for late payments from the date of presentation. If any shares are not paid within 60 days of presentation, the Township may elect to suspend any outstanding permits until all pending charges are settled.
28. The property owner(s) shall comply with all applicable federal, state, county, local and Lower Merion Township ordinances and laws regardless of specific mention herein.

Staff Report

Meeting Date: November 12, 2025

TO: Building and Planning Committee

FROM: Department of Building and Planning – Holly Colello, Planner & Colleen Hall, Senior Planner

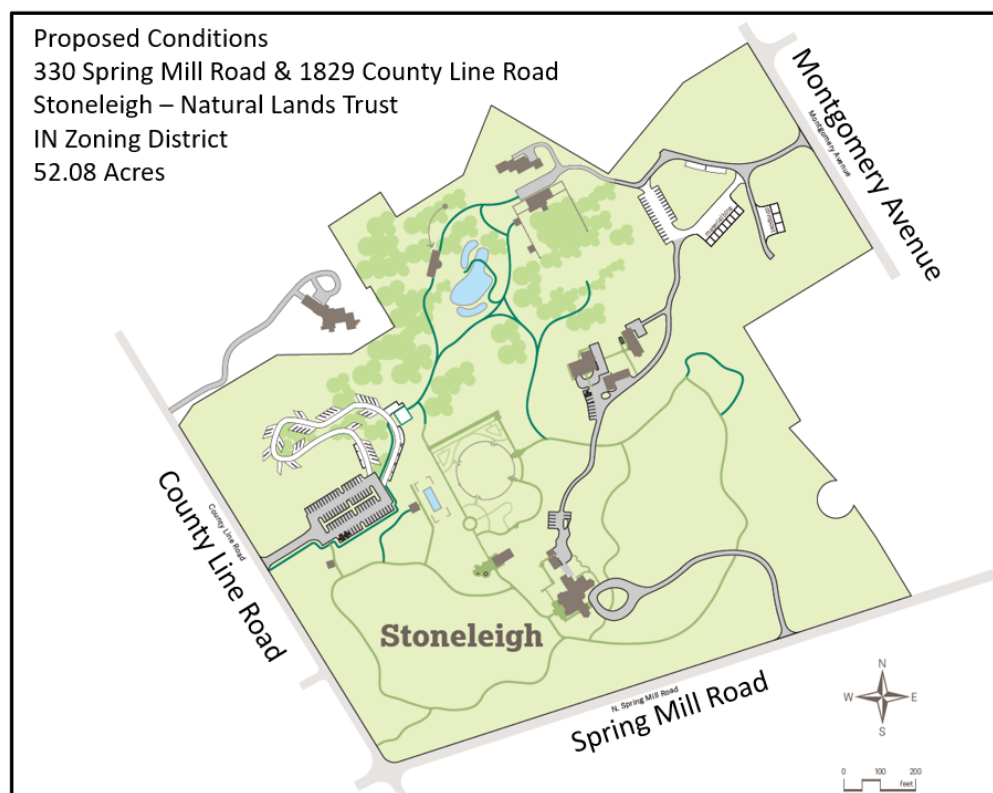
SUBJECT: Tentative Sketch Land Development Plan – 330 Spring Mill Road & 1829 County Line Road, (Natural Lands Trust – Stoneleigh), Villanova, Ward 6, LD# 3933TS

PROPOSAL:

Natural Lands Trust (NLT), a non-profit conservation organization represented by Denise Yarnoff, authorized agent and applicant, proposes improvements to Stoneleigh, a natural garden open to the public as a conservation resource since 2015. Improvements to the Stoneleigh property include the removal of an existing pool house and pool, construction of a small Welcome Center and garden plaza with fifty (50) additional parking spaces connected to the existing sixty-six (66) spaces accessed from County Line Road, and the addition of twenty-nine (29) event-restricted parking spaces along the existing driveway from West Montgomery Avenue. The plans also shall the potential relocation of the existing historic tea house, and enhancements to the design of both existing and proposed walkways.

WAIVER REQUEST:

The applicant has requested relief from [SALDO Code section 135-4.9\(F\)\(3\)](#), Complete streets and context sensitive design, to defer the installation of sidewalks along County Line Road and Montgomery Avenue.



SUBMISSION MATERIALS:

Civil Plans: Seven (7) sheets prepared by Site Engineering Concepts, LLC, dated August 28, 2025, last revised September 19, 2025.

FORM STANDARDS: Institutional Nature Preserve (IN) Dimensional Standards

The Township Zoning Code establishes four principal institutional districts: Institutional Nature Preserve (IN), Institutional Civic (IC), Institutional Education (IE), and Institutional Housing (IH). The two main goals of these institutional districts are to support the sustainability of institutional organizations, and to render them compatible with the residential neighborhoods in which they may be located; with the specific intent of the Institutional Nature Preserve District (IN) to collectively define sites and buildings for types of uses, in this case a collective series of historic buildings and landscape that encompasses the Stoneleigh property. The proposed project is consistent with the intent and form standards for the IN district.

Table 4.4. Institution Form Standards				
Table 4.4.1. Institution Nature Preserve (IN) Dimensional Standards				
REQUIRED - IN Zoning District			330 Spring Mill Road & 1829 County Line Road	
			EXISTING	PROPOSED
<u>Lot Occupation (See § 155-3.4, Lot occupation.)</u>				
A	Lot width	150 ft. minimum	657 ft.	
	Lot area	45,000 sq. ft. minimum	50.08 acres 2,182,444.8 sq. ft.	
	Impervious surface	21% maximum	10.20%	< 21%
<u>Setbacks (See § 155-3.5, Frontages.) (feet)¹</u>				
B	Front yard	50 ft. minimum	194 ft.	
C	Side yard	50 ft. minimum	23 ft. (See note)	
D	Rear yard	50 ft. minimum	53 ft.	
<u>Building Height (maximum) (See § 155-3.3, Building height.)</u>				
E	Principal	3 stories up to 40 feet	40 ft.	
<u>Parking (See Article VIII, Parking Standards.)</u>				

Notes:

Existing legal non-conformity (tea house relocation would eliminate non-conformity).

1. WAIVER REQUEST FROM SALDO CODE §135-4.9(3):

The “Stoneleigh” parcel fronts three (3) roads including County Line Road, Spring Mill Road, and Montgomery Avenue. [SALDO Code section 135-4.9\(F\)\(3\)](#), Complete streets and context sensitive design, provides language for developers to install sidewalks along all property frontages.

APPLICANTS BURDEN:

The applicant has requested relief to defer the installations of sidewalks along County Line Road and Montgomery Avenue. In compliance with the SALDO Code, applicants must provide justification for any requested waiver and submit an alternative design that demonstrates comparable or improved results. The applicant has submitted the following justification to meet this requirement:

“Natural Lands requests to defer the installation of sidewalks per Section 135-4.9(F)(3) in the following two (2) areas:

- 1. Sidewalk along Montgomery Avenue adjacent to the existing Stoneleigh Property (which is 660’ long) is asked to be deferred at this time per Section 135-4.9(F)(3)(d) since there are no immediate sidewalk connections on either side for the Montgomery Road frontage. Natural Lands offers to utilize a “green bench” and an attendant public access easement, if the Township desires during the deferment.*
- 2. Sidewalk along the portion of County Line Road adjacent to the existing Stoneleigh Property between the existing Stoneleigh driveway and the Oakwell Property is asked to be deferred at this time to allow for the continued efforts of the Township to secure a grant for the installation of this portion of sidewalks. In the event the Township is unsuccessful in securing the necessary grant for the sidewalk installation, Natural Lands is agreeable to installing sidewalk (and incurring the cost of installation) along this portion of County Line Road. (We understand that Radnor Township and Villanova are installing sidewalk on County Line Road and a cross walk to the entrance of Stoneleigh and that the Township is planning on installing sidewalk from the Stoneleigh entrance to Clairemont.)*

To the extent that a waiver is determined to be required with respect to the deferment requests for installation of the sidewalks, Natural Lands herein requests a waiver of Section 135-4.9(F).”

TOWNSHIP RESPONSE:

During its review of the Preliminary Lot Line Change Plan on October 6, 2025, the Planning Commission did not support the requested waiver to defer installation of sidewalks along County Line Road. The Commission recommended that sidewalks be installed along all property frontages including County Line Road, Spring Mill Road, and Montgomery Avenue, except where a waiver was previously granted under prior land development approvals.

Staff also notes that in 2015 the Board of Commissioners granted approval of several SALDO waivers for the properties on the Stoneleigh/Haas Estate. The approved waivers included:

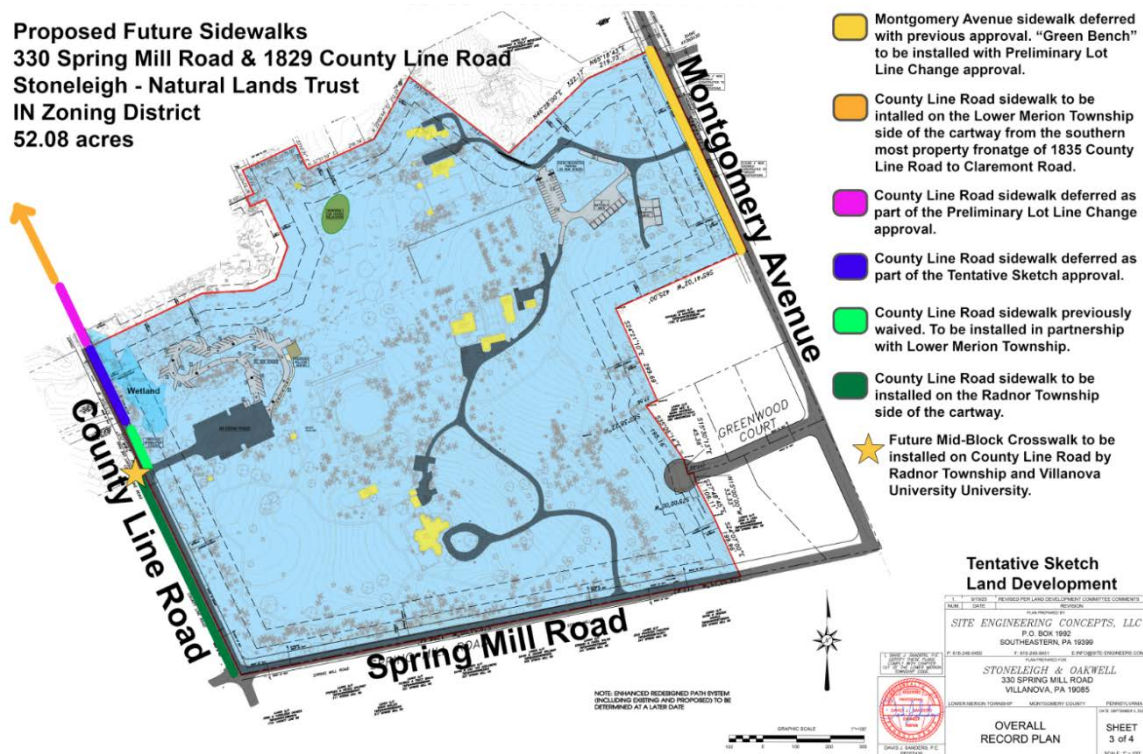
- o §135-28.A, **waiving** the installation of a sidewalk along County Line Road and Spring Mill Road;
- o §135-28.A, deferring the installation of a sidewalk along Montgomery Avenue.

There has been increased interest from surrounding neighbors (and throughout the entire Township) towards improving pedestrian mobility since Stoneleigh was approved in 2015. Lower Merion Township is actively collaborating with Natural Lands Trust, Radnor Township, and Villanova University to implement enhanced pedestrian connections along County Line Road. The proposed project will include a sidewalk on the Villanova side of County Line Road to a point opposite the driveway to Stoneleigh where a mid-block crosswalk will connect to a sidewalk on the Lower Merion Township side of County Line Road to Claremont Road. This multi-municipal project will require

multiple funding sources and be implemented over several years. The anticipated Lower Merion funded project includes sidewalks on the existing portion of Stoneleigh from the driveway to Oakwell and on the residential properties between Oakwell and Claremont Road. The portion of the project on the existing Oakwell property was not waived as part of the original Stoneleigh approval and is required as part of this application. Staff recommends that this sidewalk segment on the Oakwell expansion parcels be the financial responsibility of Stoneleigh, but installation be deferred until a complete sidewalk can be implemented between Claremont Road and the Stoneleigh driveway. Staff supports the applicant's alternative as an interim measure until a complete sidewalk can be constructed along Montgomery Avenue.

Staff also notes that pedestrian activity has increased in this area since the construction of Black Rock Middle School. The Township installed sidewalks on Montgomery Avenue between Claremont Road and Black Rock when the new middle school was constructed. Staff recommends that the Sidewalk Committee of the Board of Commissioners review the potential for extending the sidewalk along Montgomery Avenue from Claremont Road to Stoneleigh and requiring the construction of the previously deferred sidewalks along the Montgomery Avenue frontage of Stoneleigh.

The following is a graphic representation of the different sidewalk segments explained above.



ADDITIONAL REVIEWS:

- Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) & Lower Merion Township Public Works Department:**
Both recommend that future plan submissions be revised to comply with the intent of Table 4.9.1 – Road Design Standards. While this section of the SALDO requires an 8-foot-wide sidewalk and a 4-foot-wide verge along County Line Road, the Applicant has indicated a desire to only install a 4-foot-wide sidewalk constructed to Township specifications. Staff also notes that, in lieu of the standard 8-

foot-wide sidewalk and 4-foot-wide verge, the Applicant could consider utilizing the off-road pedestrian pathway standards provided in §135-4.9.F.(3)(b), subject to the review and approval of the Township Engineer and the Public Works Department.

- Staff has included the following Condition of Approval:

“The applicant shall revise future plan submissions to comply with the intent of Table 4.9.1 – Road Design Standards by constructing a future 4-foot-wide sidewalk to Township specifications along the Montgomery Avenue frontage. In lieu of the standard 8-foot sidewalk and 4-foot verge, the applicant may consider utilizing the off-road pedestrian pathway standards outlined in §135-4.9.F.(3)(b), subject to the review and approval of the Township Engineer and the Public Works Department.”

- **Township Engineer’s Review dated October 27, 2025 (Attached):**

The Township Engineer’s review spoke to Stormwater and the controlled peak discharges as well as evaluation of parking lot layouts. The review comments have been incorporated into the staff’s recommended conditions of approval.

- **Historical Commission Review dated September 29, 2025:** The Historical Commission has reviewed the applicant’s preliminary application and would support the following:

- Unification of the open space portions of the two adjacent properties;
- The continued residential use of the Oakwell mansion on a separate parcel;
- The preservation of the existing buildings, structures, and landscape as they stand;
- The reuse and relocation of the Tea House, provided it fits in a new, meaningful context within the redesigned landscape;
- The thoughtful redesign and addition of parking and welcome center, as long as it is thoughtful and integrated into the landscape;
- The removal of the 20th century pool house and pool;
- The continued preservation of existing features, including the greenhouse headhouse, Tea House, and the small cottage;
- The listing of any of those historic but currently undesignated buildings as Class I or II Historic Resources; and
- The removal of portions of pathways and roadways and the addition of new pathways within the redesigned landscape of the unified properties

- **Rosemont Villanova Civic Association:**

The applicant appeared before the civic association for a second time on November 8th at the Community Center in Bryn Mawr, where the Natural Lands Trust team provided an overview of the proposed plans and review process. Approximately 20 people attended the meeting. Members of the Association asked thoughtful questions regarding the plan and proposed use, including event activities, and expressed overall support for the project. No formal vote was taken.

TIMING & APPROVALS:

As previously noted in the separate “Background Memo” the applicant is seeking approval for three related land development actions: merging part of the Oakwell Estate into the Stoneleigh Nature Preserve, rezoning the merged lands from LDR1 to IN and modifying IN use provisions, and making land development improvements to integrate the area into Stoneleigh. Again, each action requires separate review and approval, but together they advance the larger goal of preserving the Oakwell Estate and

expanding the Stoneleigh Preserve. The Building and Planning Committee will consider and act on these applications, along with a previous Conditional Use amendment, at the November meetings.

Approval of the zoning map amendment is required before the Tentative Sketch Land Development can proceed.

Staff has provided a tentative timeline for review and approval process below.

	Monday, September 8, 2025	Planning Commission	Review of the Conditional Use Application
	Thursday, September 25, 2025	Conditional Use Hearing	
	Monday, October 6, 2025	Planning Commission	Review of the Preliminary Lot Line Change and Petition for Rezoning Request.
	Wednesday, October 15, 2025	Building & Planning Committee	Hearing is Required for the Rezoning/Text Amendment-Authorization to Advertise
	Monday, November 3, 2025	Planning Commission	Review of the Tentative Sketch Land Development
UPCOMING	Wednesday, November 12, 2025	Building & Planning Committee	Review of All requested Applications Public Hearing Rezoning/Text Amendment
	Wednesday, November 19, 2025	Board of Commissioners	

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS

The Planning Commission provided a recommendation on the Tentative Sketch Land Development Plan.

- Voted all in favor of approving the Tentative Sketch Application.
- 1. **Provided a recommendation on the SALDO Waivers.**
 - a. SALDO Code Section 135-4.9(F)(3): To defer the installation of a sidewalk along County Line Road.
 - b. SALDO Code Section 135-4.9(F)(3): To defer the installation of a sidewalk along Montgomery Avenue.
- Voted all in favor to approve the deferment of the sidewalks on County Line Road and Montgomery Avenue



**TOWNSHIP
OF
LOWER MERION**
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

75 E. Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, PA 19003 2376
Telephone: (610) 645-6200
www.lowermerion.org

LOWM 256.75

October 27, 2025

Christopher Leswing, Director of Building and Planning
Township of Lower Merion
75 East Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, PA 19003

**Re: Stoneleigh and Oakwell
Tentative Sketch Plan Review**

Dear Mr. Leswing:

In accordance with your request for the referenced submission, we have reviewed a set of four (4) plans dated 09-05-25, last revised 09-19-25, prepared by Site Engineering Concepts, LLC. The plans show the construction of a proposed welcome center, parking modifications, and associated site improvements. We offer the following comments for your consideration:

A. MAJOR ENGINEERING ISSUES

- ❖ **Stormwater**—As the property is located within the Lower Merion Mill Creek Drainage Area 3-35, the two-year post-development peak rate of runoff shall be controlled to the one-year pre-development peak rate of runoff. Storms up to the five-year frequency must be controlled to the lesser of the two-year pre-development rate or the percentage of the pre-development rate as listed in Appendix B (70%) for the particular subwatershed area. For the ten- and twenty-five-year storm, the post-development rate shall be controlled to the percentage of the respective pre-development rate as listed in Appendix B. The fifty- and one-hundred-year storms shall be controlled to the peak discharges which occurred prior to development in the respective storm frequencies.
- ❖ **Parking**- A profile for the proposed looped parking area leading to the welcome center shall be provided. Maneuverability diagrams for the proposed parking configuration shall be provided.

With the resolution of the preceding major engineering issues and the remaining comments in this letter incorporated, we recommend that the Tentative Sketch Plan be approved.

B. ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Section 101-5C(2b)—Areas of existing steep slope (twenty-five (25%) percent) shall be delineated on the plan. If grading or other improvements are shown in slopes exceeding twenty-five (25%) percent, a waiver of this code section is required for the proposed development. Additional stabilization methods may be required. This shall be evaluated with the Preliminary Plan.
2. Section 121-5B—Any regulated activity which would create more than 1,500 square feet of additional impervious requires a runoff and erosion control permit to be obtained, and stormwater management required. The existing and proposed impervious coverage for the lot shall be fully tabulated on the plan.

3. Section 121-4A(1b)2— As the property is located within the Lower Merion Mill Creek Drainage Area 3-35, the two-year post-development peak rate of runoff shall be controlled to the one-year pre-development peak rate of runoff. Storms up to the five-year frequency must be controlled to the lesser of the two-year pre-development rate or the percentage of the pre-development rate as listed in Appendix B (70%) for the particular subwatershed area. For the ten- and twenty-five-year storm, the post-development rate shall be controlled to the percentage of the respective pre-development rate as listed in Appendix B. The fifty- and one-hundred-year storms shall be controlled to the peak discharges which occurred prior to development in the respective storm frequencies.
4. Section 121-4B(2a)1, 121-15—At a minimum, the increased volume of stormwater generated by the proposed development for the twenty-five (25) year storm shall be recharged. Calculations documenting this shall be submitted with the Preliminary Plans.
5. Section 121-4E(2c)—Seepage beds installed for rate control shall be designed to empty the total design storm volume in twenty-four (24) hours or less. Calculations verifying this shall be submitted with the Preliminary Plans.
6. Section 121-4E(2f)—The requested seepage beds must contain a sediment trap accessible for maintenance. Details shall be submitted with the Preliminary Plans.
7. Section 121-4E(2i)—For any proposed seepage beds, soil permeability tests shall be performed to a depth adequate to demonstrate the functioning of the system. The location of the percolation tests shall be indicated on the plan the complete test report must be submitted for review.
8. Section 121-15—The runoff crossing to the adjacent properties during the construction phase of the project shall be managed so that the water quality/quantity does not adversely impact the adjacent properties. Diversion berms, stoned construction staging areas, and inlets/piping shall be noted to be provided as required and/or as directed by the township so as to ensure acceptable conditions during the construction phase.
9. Section 101-6A(1)—All woody vegetation to be retained within twenty-five (25') feet of a building site or disturbed area shall be protected from equipment damage by fencing placed at the driplines. The location of the fence shall be provided. A detail shall be included on the plans that complies with township standards. The Township Arborist must approve the location of the tree protection fence if it is not indicated at the driplines.
10. Section 101-5D—The absence of wetlands is required to be verified due to the presence of hydric soils on the property in the vicinity of the proposed construction. A delineation must be performed by a qualified professional experienced in wetlands ecology. The report must be submitted for review and concurrence.
11. Section 121-6H—The species of trees on the property within twenty-five (25') feet of disturbance shall be included on the plan.
12. Section 121-4E(4)—A description of how the permanent stormwater control facility will be operated and maintained shall be submitted by the design engineer. The frequency of inspection shall be listed on the plan. The contact information for the party responsible for the operation and maintenance of the facility shall be listed. The plan shall be presented in recordable form as a covenant running with the land and must be approved by the Township Solicitor prior to recording the Final Plan.
13. Section 121-6J—A sequence of construction activities shall be submitted.

14. Section 121-12—For disturbance of over one acre, an NPDES Permit must be obtained from the Montgomery County Soil Conservation District prior to issuance of any permits.
15. Section 135-4.9(Q)—The Fire Marshal must approve the site design for access and maneuverability.
16. Section 135-4.9(M)—The sight distance and clear sight triangles for the existing driveways shall be provided. The final driveway condition shall be evaluated by the Traffic Safety Unit.
17. Section 135-8.2C(1.a) – A Transportation Impact Study is required for the proposed development. Given the minor scope of the proposed development, an abbreviated study to evaluate peak hour traffic shall be provided and fully evaluated with the Preliminary Plan.
18. Section 135-4.10(B)—A Sewage Facilities Planning Module or Exemption must be approved by the City of Philadelphia and the DEP prior to recording the Final Plan. All existing sewage facilities shall be provided on the plan. Any future sanitary sewer improvements shall be connected to the public sewer.
19. Section 135-4.9(A)—Five feet wide sidewalks are required when a land development application is submitted. The design for the proposed sidewalk on County Line along the Villanova campus to the Stoneleigh property shall be evaluated for a potential mid-block crossing.
20. Section 135-4.10(A)—Adequate water supply must be documented for the development. A letter from Aqua Pennsylvania must be submitted certifying adequate supply for the additional demand. This shall be submitted with the Preliminary Plan.
21. Section 155-7.5—Compensatory tree calculations shall be added to the plan and must be compatible with the current code. An exact tree count for the lot shall be provided on the plan. Upon removal of twenty-five (25%) percent of existing trees having a caliper of six inches or greater, appropriate replacement trees will be required. The Township Arborist must approve the size, species, and location of any required replacement trees.

C. ENGINEERING COMMENTS

1. Erosion control measures shall be provided with the preliminary plans. The proposed construction access location shall be indicated. Details that conform to township standards shall be shown.
2. A profile for the proposed looped parking area leading to the welcome center shall be provided. Maneuverability diagrams for the proposed parking configuration shall be provided.
3. Potential relocation of the tea house and any associated pathways that need to be constructed or relocated shall be shown on the plan.
4. The location, size, material, and slope of proposed sanitary laterals shall be shown. The sanitary sewer connection to the existing building shall be provided.
5. The Zoning Officer must agree with the number and tabulation of the final parking demand schedule.
6. A Planting Plan shall be submitted with the Preliminary Plan and must be approved by the Planning Department and the Township Arborist.

7. A Lighting Plan shall be submitted with the Preliminary Plan. The Director of Building and Planning must approve the lighting plan.

A copy of the revised plan shall be submitted with any changes highlighted. A letter shall also be provided with the revised plan indicating how each requested revision has been addressed in the re-submission.

Please advise if we may be of further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph A. Mastronardo, P.E.

PENNONI ASSOCIATES

Township Engineer

cc: Colleen Hall, Senior Planner
Angela Forney, Planning Technician
Site Engineering Concepts, LLC

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PLANNING COMMISSION**

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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 28, 2025

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

Re: MCPC #25-0187-001
Plan Name: Natural Lands Oakwell
(1,200 sq. ft. institutional on approximately 53.3 acres)
Situate: Spring Mill Road (north)/east of County Line Road
Lower Merion Township

Dear Mr. Leswing:

We have reviewed the above-referenced tentative sketch plan as you requested on September 18, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Natural Lands Trust, Inc., proposes to demolish an existing pool and pool house and remove portions of existing asphalt and gravel driveways throughout the site. The applicant will then construct a 1,200-square foot welcome center and two new surface parking areas. The larger parking area will accommodate 50 new parking spaces along a winding, one-way driveway extending off the existing surface parking lot off County Line Road. The second parking area, located off Montgomery Avenue, will accommodate 29 new parking spaces and two bus parking spaces that are labeled to be “event/restricted parking.” Additional improvements include several materials and compost bays, the potential relocation of a tea house, and sidewalks along the Montgomery Avenue frontage of the site and a portion of the County Line Road frontage of the site.

The property is located partially in the LDR1 Low-Density Residential and IN Institutional Nature Preserve zoning districts; however, it is our understanding that the applicant has also submitted a request to consider rezoning the lands proposed to be consolidated as IN Institutional Nature Preserve.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The Land Use Element of the 2016 Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan identifies these properties as Low & Medium Density Residential (1835 County Line Road and 1800 West Montgomery Avenue) and Other Private Open Space (Stoneleigh) in the Future Land Use Map. The proposed expansion and improvements to Stoneleigh appear to



be in keeping with the comprehensive plan goals to maintain the low-density residential character of this portion of the township, while ensuring the maintenance of natural and historic features on the site.

In addition, this property is identified as Suburban Residential Area (1835 County Line Road and 1800 West Montgomery Avenue) and Open Space (Stoneleigh) in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*. Institutional uses are considered primary uses in Suburban Residential Areas, which are also characterized by extensive landscaping on individual properties.

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

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. Sidewalks and Verges. Section 135-4.9.F.(1) states that "sidewalks shall be provided along all existing and proposed public and private streets." The expanded Stoneleigh property has significant frontage on three streets. Our understanding of the status of existing and proposed pedestrian facilities on each street frontage, in relation to requirements in the township's subdivision and land development ordinance, is noted below:
 - *Spring Mill Road* – it is our understanding that the sidewalk requirement along Spring Mill Road was waived with the original Stoneleigh approval
 - *County Line Road* – the Functional Classification Map from the township's comprehensive plan shows County Line Road as a minor street. Table 4.9.1. Road Design Standards requires a 5-foot-wide sidewalk and a 3-foot-wide verge for minor streets. A section of sidewalk appears to be proposed on the site plan between the existing driveway and the northern property line with a note that states "proposed sidewalk by others."
 - *Montgomery Avenue* – the Functional Classification Map from the township's comprehensive plan shows County Line Road as a primary street. Table 4.9.1. Road Design Standards requires an 8-foot-wide sidewalk and a 4-foot-wide verge for primary streets. A sidewalk is shown along the full Montgomery Avenue frontage of the site with a note that states "future 4-foot-wide sidewalk constructed to township specifications." It is our understanding that the applicant is requesting a deferral of construction of sidewalk in this location. We suggest that future plans should be revised to show the full 8-foot-wide sidewalk required by Table 4.9.1. or that the applicant consider utilizing the off-road pedestrian pathway standards provided in §135-4.9.F.(3)(b).
- B. Pedestrian Circulation within Parking Lots. Section 135-4.9.Q.(7) contains requirements for pedestrian pathways and crosswalks that apply to all surface parking lots where 10 or more new parking spaces are proposed. The applicant is proposing two surface parking lots with more than 10 parking spaces. Future versions of the site plan should show how pedestrian circulation will be accommodated from the far end of each parking lot to the main entry of a building(s).

- C. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations. Section 135-4.9.R. contains requirements for electric vehicle charging stations. We encourage the applicant to explore installing infrastructure to accommodate electric vehicle charging as part of their proposed development.

PARKING LOT CIRCULATION

The larger of the two surface parking lots proposed contains a total of 50 parking spaces along a one-way, serpentine driveway of varying width. We noted that the fire truck turning diagram for this parking area on Sheet 4 appears to show the fire truck deviating from the edge of the driveway in at least two locations. We defer to the township engineer to review the proposed parking lot circulation.

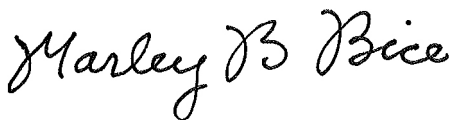
CONCLUSION

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 institutional 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 (#25-0187-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

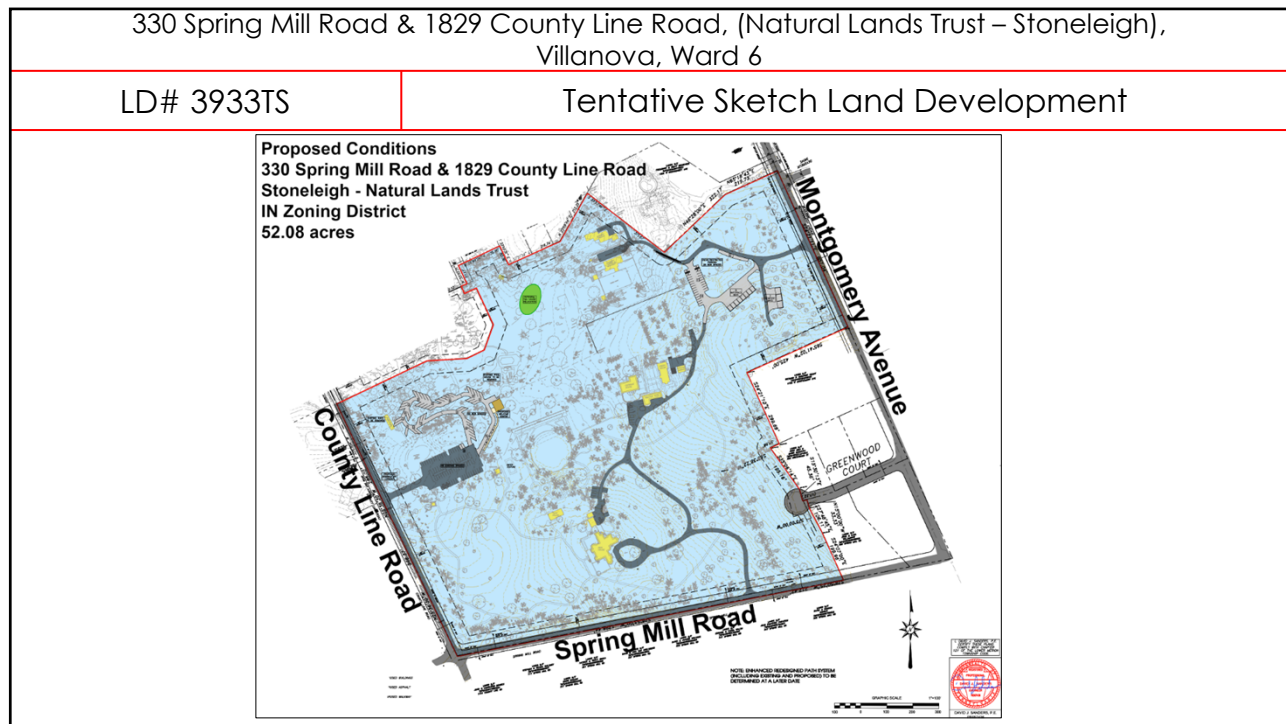


Marley Bice, AICP, Community Planning Assistant Manager
610-278-3740 – marley.bice@montgomerycountypa.gov

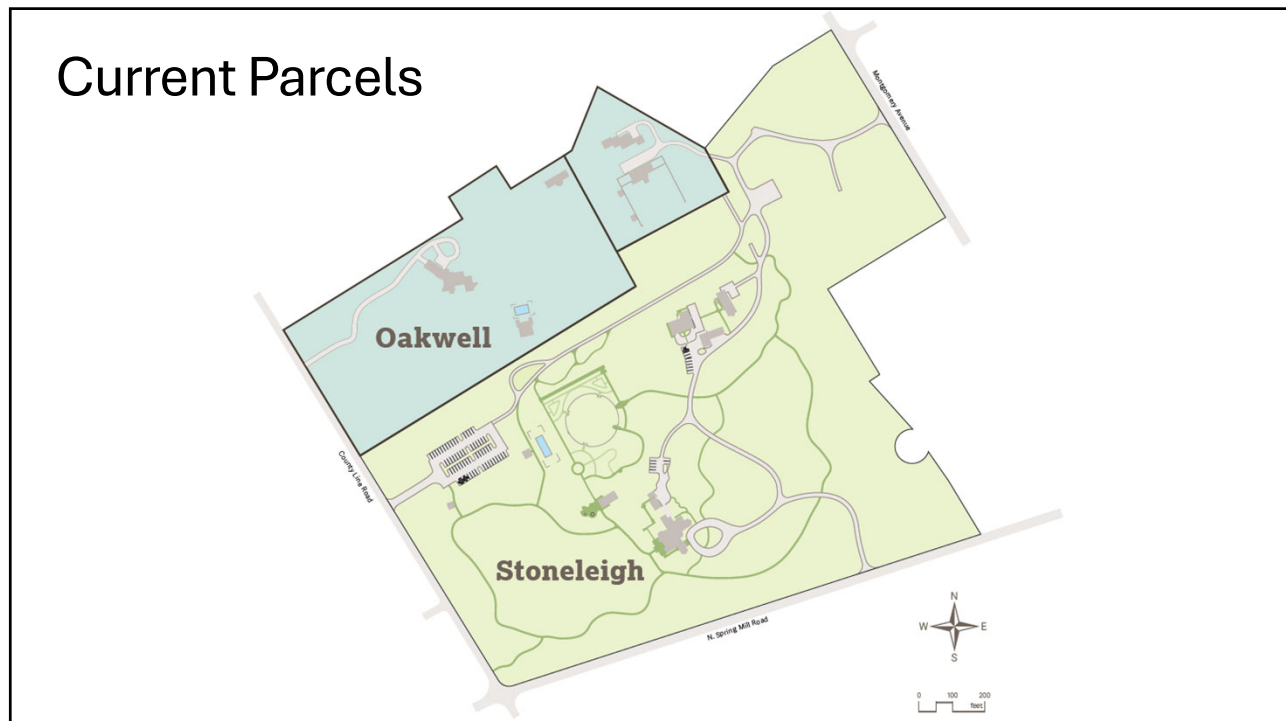
- c: Denise Yarnoff, Esq., Applicant's Representative
Gilbert P. High, Jr., Esq., Twp. Solicitor
Ernie B. McNeely, Twp. Manager
Jody Kelley, Twp. Secretary
Joseph Mastronardo, P.E., Twp. Engineer
Charlie Doyle, Twp. Asst. Dir. of Planning
Colleen Hall, Twp. Senior Planner
Greg Prichard, Twp. Historic Preservation Planner
Holly Colello, Twp. Planner
Sarah Carley, Twp. Planner
Angela Forney, Twp. Planning Technician

Attachment A: Aerial Image of Site

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

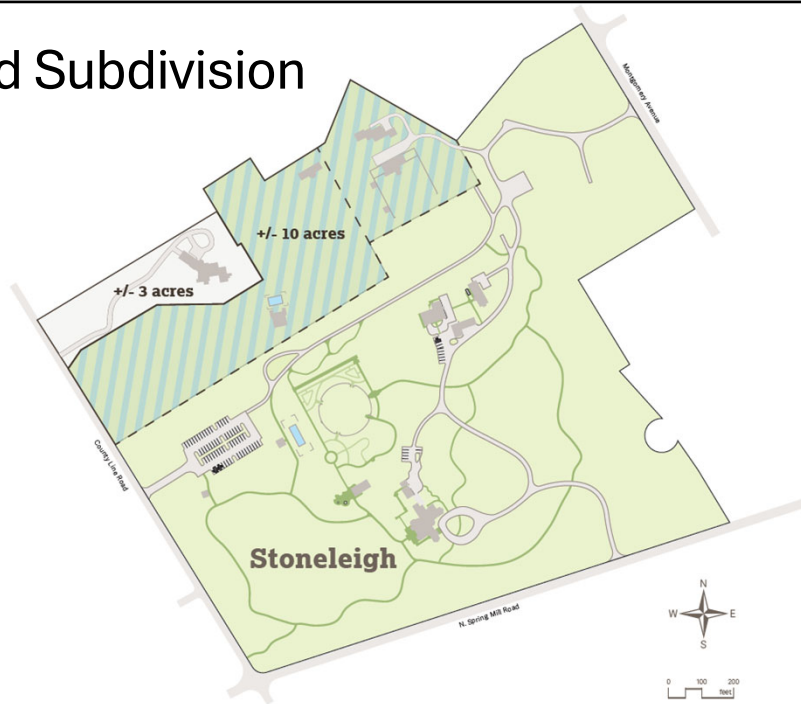


18



20

Proposed Subdivision



21

Tentative plan for expanded Stoneleigh



22



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Building & Planning

ITEM:

APPROVAL OF CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

Consider for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners approval of the following certificates of appropriateness as recommended by the Historical Architectural Review Board at their meeting held on November 4, 2025:

- a) 43 Cricket Avenue, Ardmore Commercial Historic District, 25-25 - approval to install illuminated channel letters attached to a horizontal raceway, citing Secretary of the Interior's Standard 9.
- b) 404 Arthurs Round Table, English Village Historic District, 25-26 - approval to construct a small addition at the second floor of the recessed front-facing façade, with a subcommittee to review details, dimensional shifts, and final gutter and downspout locations, citing Secretary of the Interior's Standards 9 and 10.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ATTACHMENT(S):

[November HARB Supplemental Materials.pdf](#)



43 Cricket Avenue, Ardmore Commercial Historic District

25-25

HARB

2

Action:

Approval to install illuminated channel letters attached to a horizontal raceway, citing Secretary of the Interior's Standard 9.

3



4



5



STAFF ONLY	APPLICATION NUMBER:	HARB
	HRI SURVEY #:	
	HARB MEETING DATE:	

HARB Certificate of Appropriateness Application

For Work Involving a Property in a Local Historic District

PROPERTY ADDRESS

ADDRESS [STREET, CITY]: 43 Cricket Ave, Ardmore, PA 19003

APPLICANT INFORMATION

NAME: Image360 of the Main Line

TELEPHONE #:

ALTERNATE #:

ADDRESS: 1225 Montrose Ave
Bryn Mawr, PA

EMAIL:

ZIP/POSTAL CODE: 19010

APPLICANT'S CAPACITY: ☐ OWNER ☐ ARCHITECT ☐ ATTORNEY ☒ CONTRACTOR ☐ OTHER:

OWNER INFORMATION [IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE]

NAME[S]:

TELEPHONE #:

ALTERNATE #:

ADDRESS:

EMAIL:

ZIP/POSTAL CODE: 19003

PROPERTY INFORMATION

NAME OF BUSINESS [IF APPLICABLE]: Bored Trading Cafe

CURRENT USE: Restaurant

PROPOSED USE: Restaurant

PROJECT DESCRIPTION [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ ADAPTIVE REUSE ☐ ADDITION ☐ ALTERATION ☐ DEMOLITION ☐ NEW CONSTRUCTION
☐ REPAIR ☐ REPLACEMENT ☐ PAINTING ☒ OTHER (IDENTIFY) Sign

ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES	MASONRY/ BRICKWORK	SIDING	TRIM	ROOF	DORMER/CUPOLA	CHIMNEY	GUTTER/DOWNSPOUT	EAVE CORNICE/SOFFIT	WINDOW/SCREEN/ STORM/SHUTTER	DOOR/SCREEN/STORM	PORCH/DECK/ STOOP/STAIR	PORCH ROOF	PORCH OR DECK RAILING/BALLUSTER	STOREFRONT	SIGN	AWNING	FENCE/WALL/GATE	OTHER STRUCTURE
REPAIR	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
REPLACE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
ADD	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
REMOVE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

CONTINUED

PROJECT DESCRIPTION USE ADDITIONAL PAGES AS NECESSARY TO DESCRIBE ALL OF THE WORK PROPOSED. PLEASE REFER TO THE CHECKLIST WITHIN THIS APPLICATION FOR ADDITIONAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS.

Remove Existing Channel Letter with backer panel sign - replace with Channel Letters on black Raceway to match the prior sign (Nam Phuong Bistro).

The raceway and letters will be mounted lower than the current sign in order to hide the conduit and attach to the area between the window panels. This will allow the windows at the top of the space to allow more light in than the current sign.

Note: Please include all information requested in the application checklist. Work cannot commence until a Certificate of Appropriateness, necessary building permits, and any zoning relief have been issued.

PROPOSED START DATE:

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC CHARACTER WHAT STEPS WILL BE TAKEN AS PART OF THE SCOPE OF THIS WORK TO PRESERVE YOUR BUILDING'S HISTORIC CHARACTER AND THAT OF THE SURROUNDING DISTRICT?

The raceway will be mounted in a place that had an existing sign and the area where the attachments are can be easily repaired in the future since it is wood frame, not brick or glass.

OTHER INFORMATION THE HARB SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN REVIEWING THIS APPLICATION

SIGNATURES

APPLICANT:

DATE:

OWNER [IF DIFFERENT]:

DATE:

Note: This completed application, along with all required materials, must be submitted via original printed copy, email, or other electronic means to the Department of Building & Planning a minimum of ten (10) calendar days prior to the next HARB meeting for consideration.

In lieu of a signature, the owner can issue a letter stating agreement with the application and further agrees to be bound by any conditions imposed by the granting of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Revised 10/2023



Preliminary Consultant Review

Compiled by Carol Quigley, Senior Designer / Project Manager Frens & Frens Studio, Patterhn Ives LLC

25-25

43 Cricket Avenue, Ardmore Historic District

Applicant / Owner: Image 360 for Bored Trading Cafe

Application Type: Commercial

Project Summary: Installation of front lit channel letters attached to horizontal raceway at storefront assembly mullion.

- The applicant proposes to remove an existing halo-lit channel letter sign on backer panel for the most recent tenant and install a new face-lit channel letter sign mounted to a horizontal raceway that would be centered on and fastened to the existing horizontal mullion that separates the first-floor windows from the upper transoms. While there are examples of face-lit channel letters within the district, that type of internal illumination is less appropriate than back lit channel letters which have a more traditional and less glaring aesthetic, and are more sympathetic to historic surroundings. It is for this reason that the previous Bagels & Co. sign was not fabricated as face lit channel letters (like its predecessor) and installed on a backer panel (after solid channel letters were first installed). While there is an interior benefit to the suggested changes within this proposed signage, (allowing more light to pass through the transoms when not obscured by a backer panel) and a more positive aesthetic of the reduced size of the channel letters overall, the face-lit feature is less appropriate and centering the signage on the mullion requires custom dimensioned details of the proposed letters, raceway and mullion arrangement to confirm how the size of the letters, raceway and mullion all relate to each other.
- Overall, as has been exhibited by the last two tenants' signage, installation of signage on top of the storefront assembly is complicated in many ways. The applicant notes that the existing inappropriate exterior conduit would be obscured in its current proposal. Exposed conduit should not be present in the Historic District, especially on recently altered facades. Given the complexity of mounting to the storefront, an alternative sign location and type could be considered. A projecting sign mounted to the brick to the right and above the entry door could be illuminated with small fixtures attached to the supporting bracket or the wall if a halo lit channel letter is not feasible at the storefront assembly.

Upon resolution of a more appropriate illumination and installation detail or signage location for the proposed signage, we would recommend approval of this application in accordance with Standard 9.



404 Arthurs Round Table, English Village Historic District

25-26

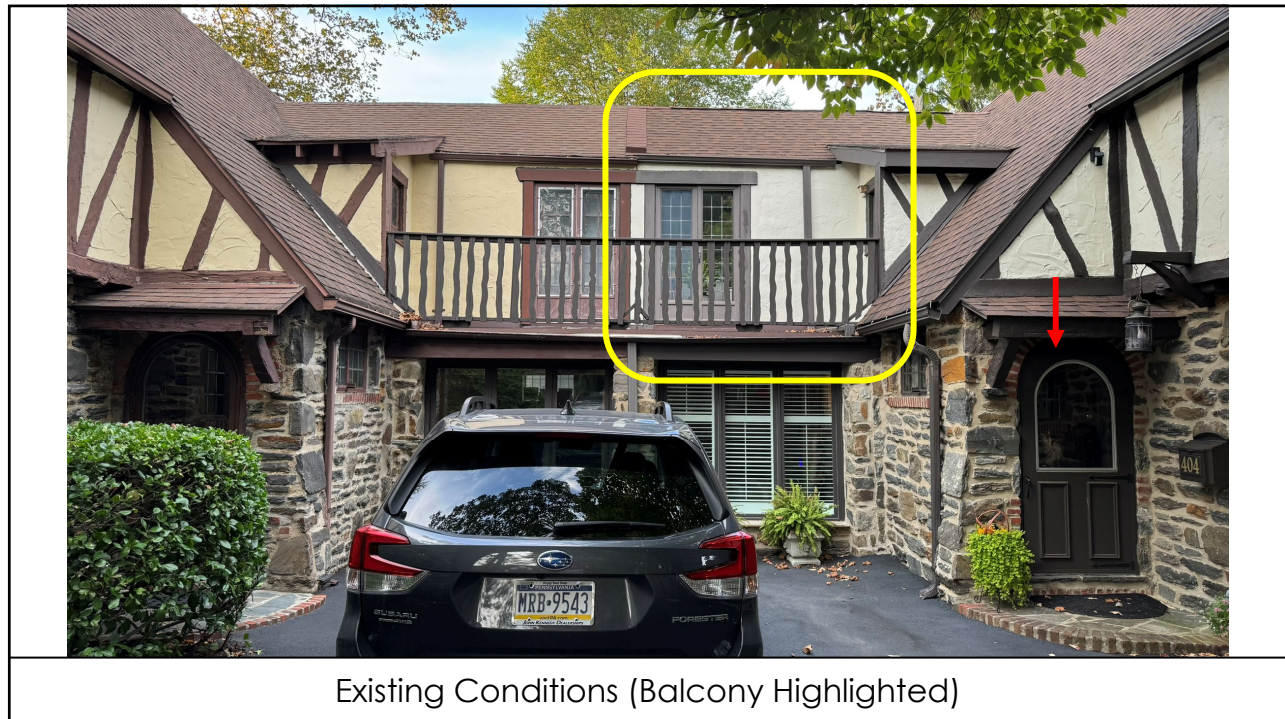
HARB

6

Action:

Approval to construct a small addition at the second floor of the recessed front-facing façade, with a subcommittee to review details, dimensional shifts, and final gutter and downspout locations, citing Secretary of the Interior's Standards 9 and 10.

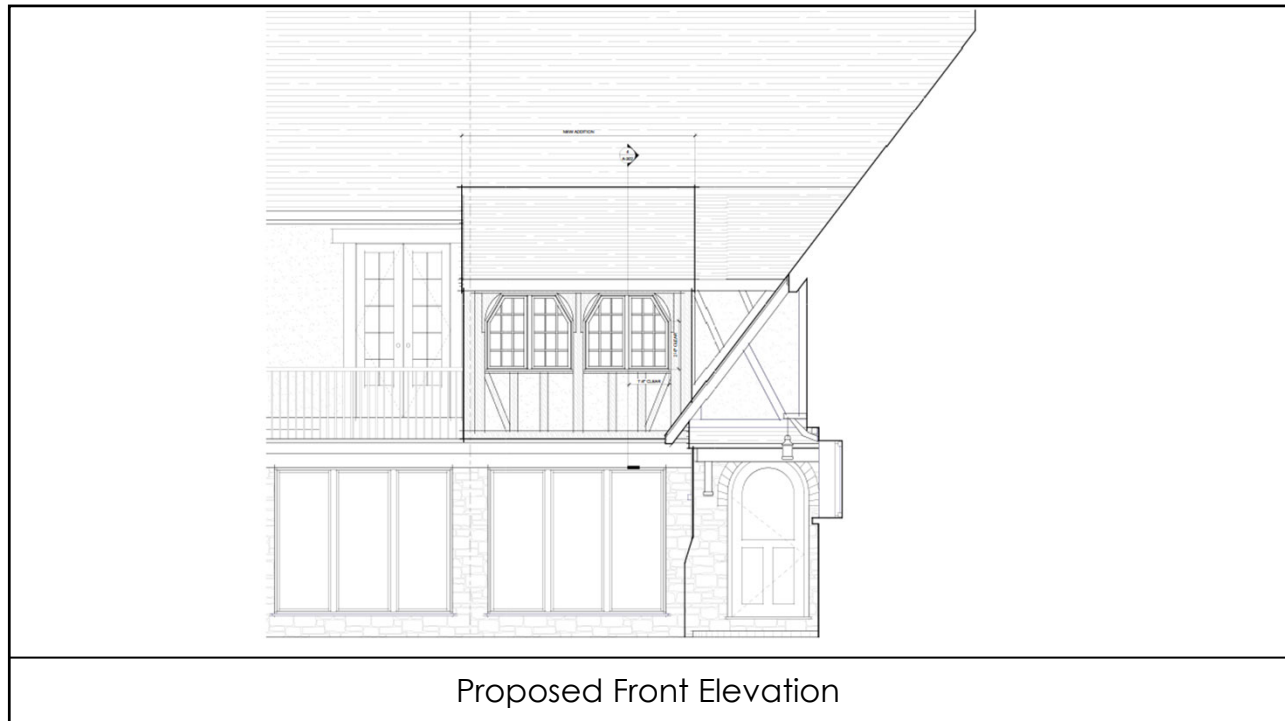
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8



9



10



11



LOWER MERION
TOWNSHIP
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION

STAFF ONLY

APPLICATION NUMBER:

HRI SURVEY #:

HARB MEETING DATE:

H
A
R
B

HARB Certificate of Appropriateness Application

For Work Involving a Property in a Local Historic District

PROPERTY ADDRESS

ADDRESS [STREET, CITY]: 404 Arthues Round Table Wynnewood, PA

APPLICANT INFORMATION

NAME: Tom Hall

ADDRESS: 240 Conestoga Rd. Wayne, PA

TELEPHONE #:

ALTERNATE #:

EMAIL:

ZIP/POSTAL CODE: 19087

APPLICANT'S CAPACITY: ☐ OWNER ☒ ARCHITECT ☐ ATTORNEY ☐ CONTRACTOR ☐ OTHER:

OWNER INFORMATION [IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE]

NAME[S]: Kirk and Stephanie Brandow

ADDRESS: 404 Arthues Round Table
Wynnewood, PA

TELEPHONE #:

ALTERNATE #:

EMAIL:

ZIP/POSTAL CODE: 19096

PROPERTY INFORMATION

NAME OF BUSINESS [IF APPLICABLE]:

CURRENT USE: Twin dwelling

PROPOSED USE: Same

PROJECT DESCRIPTION [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

- ☐ ADAPTIVE REUSE ☒ ADDITION ☐ ALTERATION ☐ DEMOLITION ☐ NEW CONSTRUCTION
☐ REPAIR ☐ REPLACEMENT ☐ PAINTING ☐ OTHER (IDENTIFY)

ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES	MASONRY/ BRICKWORK	SIDING	TRIM	ROOF	DORMER/CUPOLA	CHIMNEY	GUTTER/DOWNSPOUT	EAVE CORNICE/SOFFT	WINDOW/SCREEN/ STORM/SHUTTER	DOOR/SCREEN/STORM	PORCH/DECK/ STOOP/STAIR	PORCH ROOF	PORCH OR DECK RAILING/BALLUSTER	STOREFRONT	SIGN	AWNING	FENCE/WALL/GATE	OTHER STRUCTURE
REPAIR	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
REPLACE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ADD	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
REMOVE	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

CONTINUED

PROJECT DESCRIPTION USE ADDITIONAL PAGES AS NECESSARY TO DESCRIBE ALL OF THE WORK PROPOSED. PLEASE REFER TO THE CHECKLIST WITHIN THIS APPLICATION FOR ADDITIONAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS.

Extend existing dormer to cover an existing flat roof/deck area

Note: Please include all information requested in the application checklist. Work cannot commence until a Certificate of Appropriateness, necessary building permits, and any zoning relief have been issued.

PROPOSED START DATE:

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC CHARACTER WHAT STEPS WILL BE TAKEN AS PART OF THE SCOPE OF THIS WORK TO PRESERVE YOUR BUILDING'S HISTORIC CHARACTER AND THAT OF THE SURROUNDING DISTRICT?

Extend an existiing 2nd floor dormer at original house to enclose existing flat roof/deck to create an interior room adjacent to an existing bedroom.

We intend to repeat similar details seen on this house such as; stucco, cedar half timber, trims, and roofing,

OTHER INFORMATION THE HARB SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN REVIEWING THIS APPLICATION

Several other neighbors have built the same dormer extension element, some in keeping with the architecture of the home, some not.

SIGNATURES

APPLICANT:

DATE:

OWNER [IF DIFFERENT]:

DATE:

10/18/25

Note: This completed application, along with all required materials, must be submitted via original printed copy, email, or other electronic means to the Department of Building & Planning a minimum of ten (10) calendar days prior to the next HARB meeting for consideration.

In lieu of a signature, the owner can issue a letter stating agreement with the application and further agrees to be bound by any conditions imposed by the granting of the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Revised 10/2023



Preliminary Consultant Review

Compiled by Carol Quigley, Senior Designer / Project Manager Frens & Frens Studio, Patterhn Ives LLC

25-26

404 Arthur's Round Table, English Village Historic District

Applicant / Owner: Tom Hall for Kirk & Stephanie Brandow

Application Type: Residential

Project Summary: The applicant proposes to construct a small addition at the second floor of the recessed front-facing façade.

- The subject resource is the right half of a twin structure along Arthur's Round Table. The twin structure has a U-shape with the central open space of the "U" providing a small open courtyard with driveway for both residences. At the front of the two projecting sides of the "U" volumes that are closest to the street, a narrow canopy extends from one gable across the open drive to the neighbor's gable, continuing the foremost front façade of the structure and obscuring the view of the recessed front facades.
- The proposed addition is at the second-floor re-entrant corner of the recessed front facades and is proposed to extend the form of an existing shed dormer volume to the centerline of the twin structure, capturing a total footprint about 11' wide and 8' deep. The proposed aesthetic and detail of the new wall are similar to the details of the infilled front porch that is present along the street at the first floor. The existing porch infill is exactly that – infill of windows and low stucco / board wall set within the heavy timber frame of the previously open-air porch. Precisely repeating that detail at the proposed location, as is suggested, creates some confusion as it would suggest that there *was* a timber porch at that second level that was then filled in, which is not the case (and may never have been such a detail at this location originally within the Village?). An adjacent residence has a similar form that was most likely added, and that (presumed "new") wall continues across the attached dwelling. The overall massing of the extended shed dormer is appropriate and keeps the forms and massing of the otherwise often complex homes rather simple. The fenestration and detail has a precedent next door, but should be shown together with the first-floor fenestration (which is a former garage infill) to fully understand the proposed detail in light of the full façade. A fenestration pattern that is more similar to openings within original walls rather than infill of a porch that didn't exist may be a more simple and also more appropriate direction for this small volume.
- The materials noted are generally appropriate to the village but should be confirmed for completeness as the elevations evolve.

Upon resolution of a fenestration patterns and details of the addition, we would recommend approval of this application in accordance with Standards 9 and 10.