

**CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REPORT TO CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**APPLICANT:** Dryden Court Development, LLC  
**PROPERTY:** 450 Colwell Lane  
**MEETING DATE:** June 10, 2021  
**ZONING:** LI Limited Industrial  
**ACTION DATE:** June 10, 2021

**COMMISSION ACTION:** Recommendation of approval of the conditional use pursuant to zoning ordinance § 27-1901-B to permit a modern multifamily housing development in the LI Limited Industrial zoning district, pursuant to the following conditions:

1. the applicant shall continue to work with the Borough to reach a set of agreed upon conditions with respect to the application
2. the applicant shall continue to work with, and obtain the approval of, the Borough's emergency management team with respect to the development
3. the applicant shall executed a deed restriction applicable to all units restricting use of the garages to parking only (*i.e.* no storage)

**MATERIALS REVIEWED:** The Planning Commission reviewed the following materials:

1. plan titled Sketch Plan "G", prepared by Joseph M. Estock Consulting Engineers & Land Surveyors, dated May 12, 2021, last revised May 18, 2021
2. plan titled "Existing Features Plan", prepared by Joseph M. Estock Consulting Engineers & Land Surveyors, dated December 22, 2020, last revised May 18, 2021
3. post-construction stormwater management written narrative, prepared by Joseph M. Estock, Consulting Engineers & Land Surveyors, dated December 29, 2020
4. aerial photograph, dated December 22, 2020
5. landscape and lighting plans, 2 sheets, prepared by CMC Engineering, dated December 29, 2020
6. architectural rendering, one sheet
7. floor plans, two sheets
8. zoning determination of Borough Zoning Officer, dated May 20, 2021
9. review letter of Montgomery County Planning Commission, dated March 4, 2021
10. review letter of Borough Fire Marshal, dated May 19, 2021

## **MEETING SUMMARY:**

This is an application for conditional use approval to permit a multifamily residential development in the LI Limited Industrial zoning district containing 48 units. Applicant proposes 48 parking spaces in single-space garages, and also 48 plus parking spaces in surface parking. Conditional use approval is required to permit the multifamily residential use in the LI Limited Industrial zoning district pursuant to section 27-1901-B of the Borough's zoning ordinance. The dwelling units will be sold as condominium units.

The meeting occurred remotely using the GoToMeeting platform. The following members of the Planning Commission were present: Stacy Ellam, Chair, Elizabeth MacNeal, Vice Chair, Dana MacNeal, and Daniel Swartley McArdle. Also present for the Borough were Borough Solicitor, Michael Peters, Esquire, Borough Zoning Officer, Eric Johnson, P.E., and Executive Assistant to the Borough Manager, Brittany Rogers.

Present for the applicant were Rob Lewis, Esquire, David Brosso, Joseph Estock, PE (applicant's engineer), and Sandy Koza, PE (applicant's traffic engineer).

Mr. Lewis introduced the applicant and the professionals in attendance. Mr. Lewis explained the project being proposed, which he described as "stacked condos". Mr. Lewis further explained that although the applicant had also filed an application for apartments on the same property, that application was stayed pending disposition of the stacked condo application. Three stacked condo buildings are proposed with a total of 48 units. Each unit is adjacent to and above/below the neighboring unit, hence the concept of stacked condos. Mr. Lewis explained that this design provides at-grade access to each unit.

Mr. Lewis reviewed an aerial of the property, and explained that the property served as a transition area between a residential area and an industrial area. Currently the property has a single access point onto Colwell Lane, which also serves as secondary access to Rumsey Electric. The existing access point to Colwell Lane will remain unchanged, and a new access point will be added to 5th Avenue.

Mr. Lewis explained that the applicant had been working with the Borough's emergency management team to address concerns regarding flooding along Colwell Lane. Mr. Lewis explained that the applicant had agreed to installation of a gate along Colwell Lane, which would then force all ingress/egress to the Property out to 5th Avenue during times of flooding. Rumsey Electric would also have access to the 5th Avenue access point.

Mr. Lewis explained that the applicant would be seeking two variances—a variance to permit a 5 foot setback along 5th Avenue and a variance to permit a building height of 40 feet.

With respect to the 5 foot setback, Mr. Lewis explained that the setback would make the units feel more integrated into the community, and further that the setback would allow for greater walkability between 5th Avenue and the development, due to grading in the area. Currently, there is a 25 foot existing separation from the curbing and the edge of the right of way, so the setback would be 30 feet from the edge of the existing curb. The setback also provides room for greater drive aisles throughout the development, and also takes all improvements away from the floodplain.

The applicant performed a traffic study which showed only minor impacts on traffic, including a PM peak hour reduction from the current warehouse use.

Applicant received review letters from the Borough Zoning Officer, the Borough's Fire Marshal, and the Montgomery County Planning Commission ("MCPC"). Mr. Lewis reviewed the review letters with the Planning Commission. Other than the variances noted above, Mr. Lewis explained that the applicant would comply with the Zoning Officer's review letter. Mr. Lewis stated that the applicant would cooperate with the Borough with respect to the gate along Colwell Lane.

Mr. Lewis reviewed the renderings with the Planning Commission, and also confirmed that a stormwater management analysis had been submitted to the Borough.

Finally, Mr. Lewis noted that the applicant was currently working with the Borough to arrive at a set of conditions that would be attached to any conditional use approval granted by Borough Council.

Chair Ellam asked Mr. Johnson, the Borough's Zoning Officer, to review his review letter. Mr. Johnson explained that between the applicant's engineer and his office they had reached a consensus that all improvements would be outside of the floodplain.

Chair Ellam asked Mr. Peters to review the MCPC review letter, the Fire Marshal's review letter, and any other information from the Borough.

Mr. Peters confirmed that the applicant was working with the Borough's emergency management team, addressing the emergency management concerns, which also would serve to address the primary concerns raised in the MCPC review letter. Mr. Peters explained that in terms of the conditions, the primary condition that the Planning Commission should be aware of is that the applicant had agreed to forego development of the stacked condos for a period of no less than 7 years, and to instead operate a sports complex on the property during that time period.

Member McArdle was familiar with the grade along 5th Avenue, and asked the applicant how the applicant intended to address walkability, given that grade. Mr. Lewis explained that the grade formed one of the bases for the applicant's desired to have a 5 foot setback, as the grade drops and then rises from 5th Avenue toward the center of the property. Reducing the setback allows the grade to be leveled, improving walkability. Mr. Brasso explained that the emergency management team was also in favor of reducing the setback from 5th Avenue, as it made the development more accessible for emergency management.

Chair Ellam asked whether the facades would be staggered with the grade along 5th Avenue, and Mr. Lewis confirmed that they would be, slightly.

Vice-Chair MacNeal asked Mr. Johnson to re-confirm that no improvements were being proposed with the floodplain. Mr. Johnson confirmed that that was accurate. Vice-Chair MacNeal asked if the applicant knew how many bedrooms each unit would have, and Mr. Brasso stated 2-3 bedrooms. Mr. Brasso further stated that the project would be similar in terms of floor plan to that constructed on the 800 block of Spring Mill Avenue. The units would be 1800-2200 square feet. A craftsmen style façade will be used.

Chair Ellam asked Mr. Estock to confirm the grade from 5th Avenue—Mr. Estock explained that the emergency management team had requested a 10% grade, and he had achieved an 8% grade.

Chair Ellam also asked how the applicant would make the very industrial area feel like part of the block. Mr. Lewis acknowledged that it as a transitional site, and that the applicant was aware of that and intended to make it feel like part of the 5th Avenue neighborhood. Mr. Brasso explained that he had always found this property out of place with the rest of 5th Avenue. Chair Ellam explained that this area of 5th Avenue had previously been a dead end, so the industrial area was separated from the non-residential area.

There was no public comment.

Member McCardle moved to recommend approval of the requested condition use, subject to the conditions above. Vice-Chair MacNeal seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously by all present.