

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

**APPLICANT:** Corson Street Acquisition LP  
**PROPERTY:** 400 West Elm Street  
**MEETING DATE:** December 11, 2020  
**ZONING:** SP-3 Specially Planned Zoning District  
**ACTION DATE:** December 11, 2020

**COMMISSION ACTION:** Recommendation to grant conditional use approval, subject to the applicant demonstrating, to the satisfaction of Borough Council, that adequate park space and recreation facilities have been integrated into the design of the development, and that the design has sufficiently incorporated pedestrian and vehicular connections and other community infrastructure, to the greatest extent possible, with the nearby neighborhood.

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

- conditional use application;
- transmittal letter from Louis J. Colagreco, Jr., Esquire to Eric Johnson, dated October 30, 2020;
- confirmatory deed by Corson Street Acquisition Limited Partnership, dated December 18, 2014, recorded at deed book 5942, page 418;
- deed between Adam F. Ferraioli (grantor) to Corson Street Acquisition Limited Partnership (grantee), dated February 4, 2015, recorded at deed book 5943, page 2871;
- deed between Walter J. and Josephine M. Leszcynski (grantors) to Corson Street Acquisition, Limited Partnership (grantee), dated June 20, 2018, recorded at deed book 6095, page 1737;
- plan set entitled “Conditional Use Plans,” consisting of 8 sheets:
  - sheet 1 entitled “Site Plan,” prepared by Bohler Engineering, dated October 30, 2020;
  - sheet 2 entitled “Existing Conditions/Demolition Plan.” prepared by Bohler Engineering, dated October 30, 2020;
  - sheet 3 entitled “Landscape Plan (West),” prepared by Stuart and Associates, LLC, dated October 30, 2020;

- sheet 4 entitled “Landscape Plan (East),” prepared by Stuart and Associates, LLC, dated October 30, 2020;
- sheet 5 entitled “Landscape Details + Schedules,” prepared by Stuart and Associates, LLC, dated October 30, 2020;
- sheet 6 entitled “Lighting Plan (West),” prepared by Stuart and Associates, LLC, dated October 30, 2020;
- sheet 7 entitled “Lighting Plan (East),” prepared by Stuart and Associates, LLC, dated October 30, 2020;
- sheet 8 entitled “Lighting Details,” prepared by Stuart and Associates, LLC, dated October 30, 2020;
- architectural site plans, 6 sheets, prepared by JDavis Architects, undated;
- review letter, Montgomery County Planning Commission, dated December 7, 2020; and
- review letter, Borough Zoning Officer, dated December 3, 2020.

**MEETING SUMMARY:**

This is an application for conditional use approval pursuant to section 27-1604.4 of the Conshohocken Borough Zoning Ordinance. The tract at issue consists of 8.275 acres within the Borough of Conshohocken, and an additional 1.844 acres within Plymouth Township. The portion of the tract located in the Borough is zoned SP-3 Specially Planned District 3.

The applicant previously obtained 3 different sets of approvals for developments on this site, which did not get developed. Approvals were granted in 2013 for a 252-unit multifamily residential building, in 2015 for a 320,000 sq. ft. office building, and in 2018 for a 400,000 sq. ft. office building. The current proposal is for a 352-unit multifamily residential building.

The following members of the Planning Commission were present: Stacy Ellam, Chair; Elizabeth MacNeal, Vice-Chair; and Judy Smith-Kressley. Also present were Brittany Rodgers, Executive Assistant to the Borough Manager; Zachary A. Sivertsen, Esq., Borough Solicitor; and Eric P. Johnson, Zoning Officer. Present for the Applicant were Lou Colagreco, Esq.; Bob Dwyer; Shawn McAnally, RA; Bill Reardon, PE; and Lindsay Breylinger, PE.

Mr. Colagreco began Applicant’s presentation, summarizing the history of the project and the legal standard applicable to conditional use applications. He stated that the MCPC has endorsed the project.

Mr. Dwyer next presented for the Applicant. Mr. Dwyer discussed the 3 prior sets of approvals that were obtained for developing this property and discussed the various reasons why these projects were not completed. With this project the Applicant is proposing a high-end multifamily residential development that will have all of the amenities typically associated with high-end developments, such as pool, conference centers, dog parks, terraces, etc. The property will have 2 access points from Elm Street, one a full access driveway and the other a limited access right-in/right-out driveway. A two-story parking garage is proposed with 189 parking spaces. The existing riverside trail will be relocated closer to the riverfront and there will be several connections to the trail through the development and at either end. Several small parks are proposed throughout the property. The entire portion of the Property located in Plymouth Township will be preserved as either a park or public open space. As part of the prior development plans, Applicant had proposed a comfort station on the portion of the property near the Grande condominium complex, but due to objections from residents in that development, that was removed. Applicant would not be opposed to installing a comfort station if that was desired by the Borough. The Applicant has purchased a neighboring property that it intends to use as a public parking lot for trail users. How the property can be developed is significantly constrained by existing power lines, steep slopes, a utility easement held by Aqua, and the floodplain associated with the river. Applicant has requested zoning relief for building bulk. This zoning relief was previously granted for the prior development projects. A landscape plan has been developed for the project that complies with the requirements of the Borough's ordinances.

Mr. McAnally, the project architect, discussed the concept for the building design. The building was designed with a modern, industrial look that incorporates brick and steel elements with a mixture of heavy and light materials and colors. The goal was to incorporate elements from the Borough's industrial past.

Mr. Dwyer then discussed the traffic generation for the project, stating that detailed traffic studies had been prepared for the prior projects, and that Applicant was agreeing to comply with those proposed improvements even though the projected traffic generation by this development is 53% less than for the previously proposed office developments.

The Zoning Officer next discussed the zoning requirements applicable to the property. He stated that the requirements allow Borough Council to impose additional requirements, and that the proposed height of the building is only permitted based on allowable height bonuses tied to providing certain recreation facilities.

Mr. Dwyer stated that height bonuses had previously been secured for the 3 prior development proposals. The additional property that Applicant had recently purchased would be used for public parking for trail users and community residents. This parking area will comply with PennDOT standards and will require PennDOT approval.

Mr. Sivertsen reminded the Planning Commission that the present application is seeking conditional use approval, and that additional land development approvals are necessary. The Planning Commission will have future opportunities to review the design after Applicant provides a greater level of detail about the project.

Vice-Chair MacNeal asked about the mix of unit types in the building. Mr. Dwyer stated that there would be a mixture of studios, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom units, with an average unit size of 1.3 bedrooms. There will mostly be 1- and 2-bedroom units. Vice-Chair MacNeal asked about the building height. Mr. Dwyer stated that the building would be 135 feet tall which is similar to the previous development proposals that were approved. He stated that based on different height bonuses, Applicant could go up to 250 feet.

Vice-Chair MacNeal asked if there were any other buildings in vicinity that were 10 or more stories. Mr. Dwyer stated that the Grande was 4 stories, but all of the residents in that building had bought their units with knowledge of the prior approvals for a building of this height on the property. This proposal supports the goal in the Borough's comprehensive plan to reinvigorate the riverfront.

Vice-Chair MacNeal asked whether the proposed parks and open space would be open to the public. Mr. Dwyer stated that the parks and open space were required to be open to the public under the Borough's ordinances. He stated that the proposed parks and relocated riverfront trail constituted 50,000 sq. ft. more open space than is required by the Borough's ordinances. Additionally, Applicant is also providing the adjacent land located in Plymouth Township that will be preserved as parkland/open space.

Vice-Chair MacNeal asked whether the building height would require approval from the Borough's zoning hearing board. Mr. Dwyer stated that the height bonuses could all be obtained during the land development process and zoning relief was not needed in relation to the building height.

Member Smith-Kressley asked whether Applicant was considering a green roof. Mr. Dwyer stated that at this time a green roof was not being considered for the project. Applicant would be willing to look into this as a possibility, but it is not currently part of the plan. Applicant will be installing rain gardens, electric charging

stations, and roof top terraces, as other means of making the building more environmentally friendly.

Member Smith-Kressley raised concerns about the building being so much taller than other buildings in the area. Mr. Dwyer responded that the height of the building was permitted under the Borough's ordinances.

Member Smith-Kressley raised concerns about safety in the event of a flood, based on the large number of multifamily developments being constructed near the riverfront.

Chair Ellam asked for clarification as to where there would be encroachment into the floodplain. Ms. Breylinger identified the area of one of the drive aisles that is located in the floodplain. She stated that a retaining wall would be installed around the area and that this wall would be designed to FEMA specifications.

Chair Ellam asked for a breakdown of the percentage of the units that would be 1- and 2-bedroom units. Mr. Dwyer responded that 25% of the units would be studios, 48% of the units would be 1-bedrooms, 23% of the units would be 2-bedrooms, and 4% of the units would be 3-bedrooms.

Chair Ellam asked whether Applicant had considered making the parking garage taller and having less impervious coverage on the property. Mr. Dwyer stated that parking structures are very expensive to build and the proposal was below the maximum impervious coverage allowed under the Borough's Code.

Chair Ellam asked how tall the parking structure would be and whether the 20 spaces on the adjacent property would count toward the required parking for the building. Mr. Dwyer responded that the parking structure would only be 2 stories tall and that those 20 spaces would not count toward the required parking for the multi-family building.

Chair Ellam stated that she supported the comfort station because it was needed for those using the riverfront trail.

There was no public comment.

The Planning Commission unanimously voted to recommend approval of the conditional use application subject to Borough Council's determination that adequate park space and recreation facilities have been integrated into the design of the development, and that the design has sufficiently incorporated pedestrian and vehicular

connections and other community infrastructure, to the greatest extent possible, with the nearby neighborhood.

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

**RE:** Zoning Amendment eliminating Part 19-B Residential Overlay

**MEETING DATE:** December 11, 2020

**ACTION DATE:** December 11, 2020

**COMMISSION ACTION:** Recommendation to adopt the zoning amendment.

**MEETING SUMMARY:**

Mr. Sivertsen summarized the proposed zoning amendment and the basis for Borough Council's desire to eliminate Part 19-B of the Zoning Ordinance. He stated that this part of the Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2010 when Borough Council was looking to encourage redevelopment of limited industrial properties and increase the amount of multifamily housing stock in the Borough. The amendment proved effective and there is no longer a lack of multifamily housing in the Borough. Additionally, Borough Administration has performed a review of this part of the Zoning Ordinance from a housing stock perspective and an emergency management perspective, and recommends that Borough Council adopt this zoning amendment.

The Planning Commission asked about the areas of the Borough that would be impacted by the amendment. Mr. Sivertsen stated that this part created an overlay district that only applied to the LI Limited Industrial zoning district, which is dispersed throughout the Borough.

The Planning Commission generally discussed the large number of multifamily residential developments that exist in the Borough and are under development. Vice-Chair MacNeal asked whether the previous application would be affected by this zoning amendment. Mr. Sivertsen stated that it would not because that property was zoned SP-3, not LI.

There was no public comment.

The Planning Commission unanimously voted to recommend adoption of the zoning amendment.