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TOWNSHIP OF BERLIN

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July 13, 2021

Berlin Township Planning Board
Berlin Township Municipal Building
135 Route 73 South
West Berlin, New Jersey 08091

ATTN: Mr. Craig DeGeorge, Chairperson

RE: SITE PLAN- PROPOSED OFFICE BUILDING, 73 HOLDINGS, LLC
560 Route 73 North; Block 903, Lot 3
Berlin Township, Camden County, New Jersey

Dear Planning Board Members,

I, previously, observed the site conditions during an on-site meeting with the applicant on April 16, 2021. I have completed the review of the following:

- a. Site Plan set, 4 sheets, dated May 13, 2021, by Joseph A. Mancini, P.E.;
- b. "Survey of Property", dated March 18, 2021, by Anthony F. DiRosa, N.J.P.L.S. (not sealed)
- c. Planning and Zoning Board Application Submission, 24 pages

I offer the following comments and recommendations for consideration by the Planning Board members:

- 1a. The lot is located on the southwest corner of N.J.S.H. Route 73 and Katherine Avenue. There is an existing, two-story building with a basement. Based upon the floor plans, which the applicant had given to me, the first-floor area is 774 square feet and the proposed second floor area is 701 square feet for a proposed total floor area of 1,475 square feet. The existing second floor area is not noted but is less than the proposed floor area. The applicant is proposing to use the building for his financial planning services business. I recommend that the applicant inform the Planning Board of the operations of the business, including business days and hours, number of employees and visitors/ clients.
- 1b. The existing building appears to have been, initially, used solely as a residence. The building appears to have been converted to an office some time ago but, still, a portion or all of the building may be used as a residence. I recommend that the applicant inform the Planning Board of the current use of the building.

2a. The lot is located within the C-1 Highway Commercial zoning district. The proposed office use is permitted within this zoning district (Section 340-51.C).

2b. The following uses surround the parcel:

- 1) Across Route 73- LGB Mechanical contractor's office and yard, within the C-2 Highway Commercial zoning district;
- 2) South side- Atlantis Granite Kitchen remodeler within the C-1 Highway Commercial zoning district;
- 3) West side (rear)- single family residence within the C-1 Highway Commercial zoning district;
- 4) Across Katherine Avenue- single family residence within the C-1 Highway Commercial zoning district.

2c. The following is a listing of the required and existing zoning conditions:

	Required	Existing/ Proposed
1) Building Coverage	65% max	10.3%
2) Lot Area	20,000 s.f. min	9,800 s.f.*
3) Lot Width	100' min	70' *
4) Lot Depth	150' min	140' *
5) Building Setback		
a) Front Yard	50' min	Along Rt. 73 = 51.3' Katherine Ave = 7.3'*/ 12'+/- (scaled)**
b) Rear yard	25' min	61'+/- (scaled)
c) Side Yard	15' min	20.3'
6) Building Height	35' max	19'+/- (scaled)/ 30'+/- (scaled)

*Pre-existing, non-conforming condition.

**** I question if a front yard setback is required for the proposed porch, even though it will be greater than the setback to the existing porch. I defer this matter to the Planning Board Solicitor for his comments.**

3a. I did not receive the architectural building elevations and floor plans with the site plan application. I did receive these plans from the applicant at my on-site meeting on April 16, 2021. I recommend that the applicant present the proposed architectural plans to the Planning Board, noting the proposed building façade colors and materials. I recommend that the site plan be revised to be consistent with the architectural building elevations, which includes the removal of the sidewalk, steps and raised patio along the front of the building.

3b. Since the applicant is proposing renovations to the building, the applicant must demonstrate that the proposed building modifications comply with Section 340-59, Building facades and design.

4a. The plan depicts five parking spaces, which includes one handicap parking space. **The proposed increase in floor area triggers the need for the granting of a variance to permit five parking spaces rather than the required six parking spaces [Section 340-95. A. (15)]. The applicant must demonstrate why the Planning Board should consider the granting of this variance.**

4b. There is an existing stone parking area with a concrete pad for the handicap parking space and access aisle. There is large pine tree buffer along the rear (west) line of the property, which overhangs this parking area. It appears that the applicant is proposing to remove the overhanging branches and any unhealthy trees within this area. The proposed drive aisle is proposed to be approximately 18 feet wide at the beginning of the parking area and widens to 20 feet at the end of the parking area. The proposed aisle width is inadequate for easily maneuvering vehicles in and out of the parking spaces. It is probable that motorists will be maneuvering their vehicle off the edge of the proposed pavement. I recommend that the drive and aisle width be increased to, at least, 23.5 feet. **The applicant must obtain a waiver for any driveway width, which is less than the required 25 feet width (Section 340-93. I.).**

4c. **The applicant, also, must obtain the following waivers:**

- 1) **To permit the maneuvering of vehicles within the driveway entrance lane, within 20 feet of the right-of-way line of Katherine Avenue (Section 340-93. J.)**

The parking space, which is closest to Katherine Avenue is only 7 feet from the right-of-way line of Katherine Avenue. The applicant informed me that there are a minimal number of clients, which will be visiting his site, and the building will be occupied, mainly, by himself with a minimal number of staff members. The Rider to the Application notes that the business will operate during normal business hours of the week and clients will visit the site by appointment only. If this is the case, I recommend that the Planning Board consider granting this waiver with, possibly, restrictions that visitors be scheduled by appointment with gaps in time between appointments, to prevent any potential vehicular conflicts. I would assume that this waiver may have been granted for the initial office use, by the Planning Board, as the condition already exists.

- 2) **To permit the parking area to be closer than 20 feet to the curb line of Katherine Avenue (Section 340-93. F.).** It appears that, in providing the necessary widths for the proposed parking spaces and aligning the curb line along Katherine Avenue with the end of the curb radius at Route 73, the parking area will be approximately 19 feet from the proposed curb line. I recommend that the Planning Board consider granting this waiver as it is not much different than what currently exists.

5a. The plan depicts existing concrete curb and sidewalk along the frontage of Route 73. The plan depicts proposed concrete curb and sidewalk along the frontage of Katherine Avenue.

5b. The proposed curb line along Katherine Avenue does not comply with the requirement that it be parallel to and 15 feet offset to the centerline of the street right-of-way. The size of the existing curb radius at the corner of Katherine Avenue and Route 73 is substandard. Due to the current physical conditions at the street corner, it will be difficult and costly to construct the required curb radius. Therefore, I recommend that the proposed curb line along Katherine Avenue align with the end of the curb radius and be depicted parallel to the right-of-way line. The edge of the proposed sidewalk shall be 3 feet behind and parallel to the proposed curb face. I recommend that the existing concrete driveway apron be removed and a widened apron with the above-mentioned curb be depicted on the plan. **I recommend that the Planning Board consider granting a waiver to permit the parallel curb offset in alignment with the end of the curb radius.**

- 5c. The plan must be revised to include a profile for the frontage of Katherine Avenue, depicting the profile lines and elevations of the existing centerline, edge of pavement and proposed gutter line elevations and slopes. It appears that, due to the variations in the slope of the existing edge of pavement, it may be necessary to re-profile the existing pavement shoulder.
- 5d. The plan must be revised to depict a typical roadway cross section along Katherine Avenue, depicting the sawcut edge of the curb trench, the proposed trench pavement restoration cross section (2" thick HMA 9.5M64 surface course over 5" thick HMA 19M64 base course), concrete curb, concrete sidewalk, topsoil and seeding. All concrete improvements within the right-of-way of Katherine Avenue shall be noted as "N.J.D.O.T. Class B Concrete." I recommend that Site Plan Note 10 be revised, accordingly.
- 5e. The plan depicts the proposed sidewalk, along Katherine Avenue, to connect to the existing sidewalk along Route 73, at the street corner. In order to provide a landing area, at the intersection of the sidewalks, with the compliant slope (in both directions) of 2% maximum, it may be necessary to reconstruct the existing handicap ramp and sidewalk behind the ramp. I recommend that the plan be revised to address this matter.
I would note that any improvements within the right-of-way of Route 73 will require N.J.D.O.T approval and permit.
I recommend that the plan be revised to depict the existing and proposed locations, if resetting is required by the construction of the sidewalk, of the stop sign and "NO THRU TRAFFIC" sign.
6. I question if the area between the parking spaces and handicap ramp will be concrete sidewalk to allow for the employees and visitors to access the building, via a sidewalk. I recommend that the applicant address this matter and the plans be revised, accordingly.
- 7a. The plan depicts existing and proposed contour lines and spot elevations. The proposed grading scheme for the parking area is acceptable.
- 7b. The existing parking area surface is stone. The applicant is proposing to pave the parking area. The proposed pavement cross section is acceptable.
- 7c. Site Plan Note 22 states that there will be less than 0.25 acre of new impervious surfaces. Therefore, the proposed development is exempt from the N.J. stormwater management regulations.
8. The plan does not depict a designated loading zone. I would assume that any deliveries would be made by vehicles, which will park in one of the parking spaces. I recommend that the applicant inform the Planning Board of the anticipated deliveries and provisions for the maneuvering and parking of the delivery vehicle.
- 9a. The plan depicts a 4 feet (scaled) by 6 feet (scaled) "fenced area for trash/recycling receptacles" along the left side of the building, near the rear of the building. The plan must be revised to provide the details for the proposed enclosure, (wall and gate materials and height, floor material, etc.). I would note that Section 340-22 requires that the materials for the trash enclosure match the same materials as the building façade and **any deviation will require the granting of a waiver.**

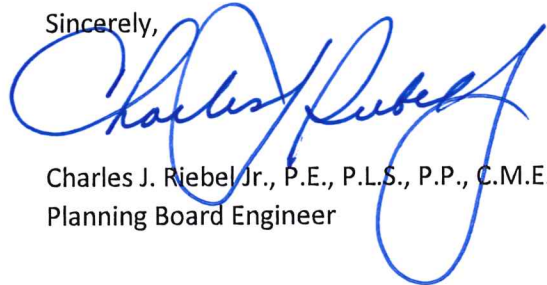
- 9b. I recommend that the applicant inform the Planning Board of the frequency and times of day of the collection of solid waste and recyclables to ensure that there will be no adverse impacts to the adjacent and nearby residents. The applicant must, also, demonstrate the ability of the collection vehicle to access the containers, and maneuver within the parking area to enter and exit the site in a forward movement.
- 9c. I would assume that the proposed business generates minimal amounts of solid waste and recyclables. I recommend that the applicant demonstrate the adequacy of the size of the trash enclosure to house all waste and recyclables containers.
- 10a. The plan depicts a proposed 10 feet high site light along the west side of the parking area and an existing porch light to illuminate the parking area and pedestrian ways on the site. I recommend that the plan be revised to provide a minimum level of illumination of one foot candle for all areas, which are used by pedestrians and motorist while preventing the carryover of illumination and glare past the property lines.
- 10b. **The applicant must obtain a waiver to permit the LED site light fixture rather than the required high pressure sodium fixture [Section 200-69. E. (21)].** This waiver, is routinely, granted by the Planning Board.
- 11a. As previously mentioned, it will be necessary for the applicant to trim the branches of the mature pine trees to provide for the use of the parking drive aisle. The necessary trimming of these trees will eliminate a majority of the screening effect to the adjacent residential neighbor. The plan depicts a proposed 6 feet high, solid vinyl fence along the property line, common with the adjacent residentially use property, and along a portion of the south property line to the extended line of the front of the building to serve as a screen. Since the adjacent, residentially used lot is within the commercial zoning district, a 25 feet wide buffer strip is not required by the Township Code.
- 11b. The plan must be revised to depict a 5 feet wide shade tree easement along both street frontages (Section 200-92. G.).
- 11c. The plan depicts proposed landscape plantings along the west side of the parking area. The plan, also, notes that supplemental shrubs and trees will be planted, "as directed by Township Engineer" within the area, which contains the pine trees.
The plan must be revised to depict proposed landscape plantings around the base of the proposed freestanding sign. There are existing plantings within the front yards of both streets.
- 11d. The Township Code requires that irrigation be provided for all lawn and landscape areas. There appears to be a connection for an irrigation system along the front of the building. I recommend that the applicant address this matter.
12. Section 200-92. H. requires that a cross access easement be dedicated, when determined to be necessary. Since the existing building on the adjacent, southerly Lot 5 is in alignment with the proposed drive aisle. I do not recommend that the cross-access easement be dedicated at said drive aisle. I question if it would be beneficial if a cross access easement was dedicated within the front yard, in alignment with the existing drive aisle on the adjacent Lot 5. The dedication of the cross-access easement by the applicant does not require that he construct the physical drive within the easement, at this time.

- 13a. The site plan depicts the location of a proposed 64 square feet "freestanding pylon sign", with changeable copy sign for time and temperature, near the corner of Route 73 and Katherine Avenue. The plan must be revised to depict the details for the sign. The proposed sign complies with the minimum setback requirements of Section 340-83. J.
- 13b. There is no mention of any façade signage on the site plan and no façade signs are depicted on the architectural building elevations. Therefore, it appears that no façade signage is proposed by the applicant.
- 13c. The plan depicts the location of a proposed flag pole within the front yard of Route 73. I believe that the height of flagpoles has been restricted to 25 feet, which is the maximum, permitted height for a freestanding sign. I recommend that the plan be revised to note the proposed flagpole, type of flag to be flown and, if an American flag, the required illumination for evening display.
14. Except for the depiction of the location of the sewer lateral cleanout, behind the building, no utility mains, lines and services are depicted on the plans. **I question if the applicant is requesting a waiver from the requirement to depict said utilities since the proposed development will not result in any new utility connections or alterations.** I recommend that the applicant address this matter.
15. The applicant has submitted copies of a recent property survey, deed and title report. No deed restrictions and/or protective covenants have been noted in any of these documents.
16. I recommend that the Police Department and Fire Marshal review the plans and submit any comments and recommendations to the Planning Board prior to the hearing for the site plan application.
17. The applicant must obtain all necessary approvals and permits from all governing departments and agencies.
18. If the site plan is approved and after we have received the final version of the site plan, which conforms with the conditions of the Planning Board approval, we will prepare estimates for the determination of the amounts of the performance and maintenance guarantees and inspection escrow. The applicant must post these guarantees and escrow at the appropriate times.
19. I recommend, in addition to the recommended details previously noted, that the following details be addressed:
 - a. "Handicap Parking Sign Detail"- the mounting height of sign R7-8 be noted and the type of post be noted.
 - b. "Concrete Curb Detail"- remove "3500 PSI" and just note "CLASS B CONCRETE" from the concrete note. Please add to Note 2 that a score joint shall be placed midway between the expansion joints.
 - c. "Concrete Sidewalk Detail"- just call out "Class B Concrete" and note the 2% slope is away from the building and towards the street.
 - d. "Depressed Curb and Driveway Apron & Sidewalk" detail- note the dimension between the back of the curb and sidewalk to be 2.5 feet, the concrete to be Class B and the ½" slope across the top of the depressed curb.
 - e. "Paving Section"- note the surface course as HMA 9.5M64 and stabilized base course as HMA 19M64.

- f. A note be added to the plan for the repairs and pargetting of the existing retaining wall along the front of the property, along Route 73.
- 20a. The applicant must obtain development certification (approval) from Camden County Soil Conservation District if the land disturbance is 5,000 square feet or more.
- 20b. The applicant must obtain site plan approval or exemption from Camden County Planning Board.
21. I recommend that any denial or approval of the site plan be conditional upon:
- a. The comments of the Planning Board and Planning Board Solicitor;
 - b. The comments from the Police Department and Fire Marshal;
 - c. Obtaining all necessary variances and waivers;
 - d. Obtaining all necessary approvals and permits from all governing departments and agencies;
 - e. Contents of this report;
 - f. Compliance with all applicable Federal, State, County and Township rules, regulations, laws, and ordinances.

Please contact me with any questions or comments, regarding the contents of this correspondence.

Sincerely,



Charles J. Riebel Jr., P.E., P.L.S., P.P., C.M.E.
Planning Board Engineer

c.c.: Honorable Mayor Phyllis A. Magazzu (email)
 Council President Christopher T. Morris (email)
 Vice Chairperson Frank McHenry (email)
 Mr. John Holroyd, Township Construction Official (email)
 Mr. Dante Magazzu (email)
 Ms. Alvina Moore (email)
 Mr. Edward Potts (email)
 Ms. Betsy Simpson (email)
 Ms. Suzanne Cossaboon, Alternate No. 1 (email)
 Mr. David F. Carlamere, Esq., Planning Board Solicitor (email)
 Mr. David N. Rowan, Esq., Planning Board Solicitor (email)
 Police Chief Wayne Bonfiglio (email)
 Mr. Joseph Cornforth, Township Fire Marshal (email)
 Mr. Joshua Shellenberger, Zoning Officer (email)
 Mr. Alec Price, 73 Holdings, LLC (email)
 Mr. Brian D. Lozuke, Esq. (email)
 Holiday Architects (email)
 Mr. Joseph A. Mancini, P.E. (email)