

Hawk Valley Associates, P.C.

Professional Planning, Zoning and Consultant Services

May 18, 2021

City of Reading
ATTN: Naomi Crimm, Planner
Community Development Services
815 Washington Street
Reading, PA 19601

**RE: *Medical Arts Annexation Plan and Land Development Plan
226 and 230 North 5th Street; Revised Preliminary Plan Review***

Dear Ms. Crimm,

Pursuant to your request, my office has reviewed the Preliminary Plan Application for the Medical Arts Annexation Plan and Land Development Plan, which has been revised and submitted on behalf of Fifth Street Holdings, LLC (Applicant). I hereby offer the following comments for consideration in accordance with the prevailing standards specified by the City of Reading and the PA Municipalities Planning Code:

- (1) This proposed development is located on two (2) parcels of land containing a cumulative total of 20,029 square feet (0.46 acre), which are located at 226 and 230 North 5th Street (Berks County TPID 075307757166970001 and 07530775716791). The Applicant proposes the following:
 - (a) The Applicant proposes to combine the two (2) parcels of land into a single parcel of land through an Annexation Plan.
 - (b) The Applicant proposes to convert the existing building located at 230 North 5th Street from a commercial and office use to a mixed use concept that includes 4 commercial or retail uses (4,409 square feet) in the basement and 1st floor and 31 residential apartment units on the 2nd floor through 11th floor of the building.
 - (c) The Applicant proposes to construct a commercial building at 226 North Fifth Street in order to accommodate 3 retail uses (3,873 square feet) on floors 1 and 2 and 4 residential apartment units on the 3rd floor, which will be added onto the south side of the existing Medical Arts Building located at 230 North 5th Street.
 - (d) The Applicant has requested to rezone the property at 230 North 5th Street, which includes the existing Medical Arts Building from C-R Zoning District to C-C Zoning District.
- (2) The Medical Arts Annexation Plan and Land Development Plan have been revised by the Applicant. The current submission includes 8 plan sheets prepared by Ludgate Engineering Corporation, which do not reflect a revision date at this time. A cover letter was also submitted. No other documents have been submitted with the revised plans.

- (3) The development is located on two (2) parcels of land, which are described as follows:
- (a) The 13,359 square foot (0.31 acre) property located at 226 North 5th Street is contained within the Commercial Core (C-C) Zoning District.
 - (b) The 6,670 square foot (0.15 acre) parcel of land located at 230 North 5th Street was previously located within the Commercial Residential (C-R) Zoning District. A request to revise the Zoning Map in order to change the zoning classification of 230 North 5th Street from C-R to C-C was approved by City Council on May 10, 2021. This action should be noted on the plan and the references to the C-R Zoning District should be removed.

The Applicant should resolve the zoning compliance and lot annexation requirements prior to municipal approval.

- (4) The Applicant submitted a Special Exception Application in order to utilize the guidelines for Adaptive Reuse at these properties. The Zoning Hearing Board issued a favorable decision on Zoning Hearing Board Case 2020-17 on November 18, 2020, which should be referenced as a prelude to the Conclusion of Law. [Zoning 600-807.B.4e; 600-808.B.4a; 600-1202.A]
- (5) The site is located within the Callowhill Historic District. This application is subject to further review and consideration by the City of Reading Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB). Architectural enhancements to the existing and proposed building facades are encouraged to meet the design criteria and planning objectives of the Callowhill Historic District. As part of this process, the architectural renderings of the building façade and floor plans should be submitted to the HARB and Planning Commission for review and approval. A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) should be issued by the HARB prior to municipal approval. [Chapter 295 of the Code]
- (6) The existing properties (226 and 230 North 5th Street) shall be annexed together and joined in common deed in order to form a single property. A draft deed description should be submitted as part of this application. The plan and the deed shall be recorded with the Berks County Recorder of Deeds as a condition of municipal approval. [SALDO 515-307, 515-310 and 515-403]
- (7) The proposed uses to be located at 230 North 5th Street shall include: retail uses on the basement and first floor; and 31 residential apartment units on floors 2 through 11. An architectural rendering with elevations and floor plans should be submitted for review in order to verify that the proposed uses comply with the provisions for the C-C Zoning District, the Callowhill Historic District and the provisions relating to Adaptive Reuse as well as mid to high rise apartment units. Any discrepancies between the plan notes and information on the plan views should be corrected. [Zoning 600-807.A, 600-1101, 600-1102 and 600-1202.A]
- (8) The proposed uses to be constructed at 226 N. 5th Street include: 3 retail uses on the first floor; no uses on the second floor; and 4 residential apartment units on the third floor. The Applicant should submit architectural rendering with elevations and floor plans should be submitted for further review to verify if the t proposed uses comply with the provisions that are established for the C-C Zoning District and the Callowhill Historic District meets the objectives of the Zoning Ordinance. Further, the proposed building should comply with all building code and site accessibility requirements. Any discrepancies between the plan notes and information on the plan views should be corrected. [Zoning 600-807.A, 600-1101 and 600-1202.A]

- (9) The Applicant has been previously advised that the existing building located at 224 North 5th Street (TPID 07530775716692) is also located along the property line (zero lot line or setback), which is permitted within the C-C Zoning District. However, this building contains existing windows and possibly emergency exits that will be immediately adjacent or adjoining to the proposed building addition to the Medical Arts Building at 226 North 5th Street. Further discussion shall be required in order to verify if there are any conflicts with zoning, building code or site accessibility requirements. This matter should be resolved prior to Preliminary Plan approval. [Zoning 600-807.A, 600-1101 and 600-1202.A]
- (10) The proposed 35 residential apartment units should comply with the required facilities, amenities, utilities and habitable area specified by Section 600-1101 of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant should demonstrate compliance of these requirements as part of the architectural renderings, floor plans and/or notes on the plan. [Zoning 600-1101, 600-1102, 600-1202.A]
- (11) The Landscaping Plan should include street trees and landscaping enhancements along the frontage of the property and off-street parking area. The previous plan that was submitted for review included 5 street trees (Red Maples) that were to be planted along North 5th Street. These street trees have been removed from the current plan and replaced with a rain garden with no information that can be considered at this time. Further discussion between the Applicant, Planning Commission and the Certified Arborist shall be required in order to establish the desired exterior appearance along North 5th Street. [Zoning 600-913 and 600-914; SALDO 515-509]
- (12) A Lighting Plan has been prepared and submitted as part of Plan Sheet 5. The development is located in Callowhill Historic District, which includes a mixed-use neighborhood. The Applicant should consider a reduction in the intensity of the illumination along the front façade and within the off-street parking areas during the hours of 10:00 pm and 6:00 am. Exterior streetlight enhancements should also be considered along North 5th Street. [Zoning 600-912]
- (13) The following comments pertain to site accessibility issues for this development:
 - (a) The existing driveway located at 226 North 5th Street will be abandoned or closed. The Applicant should describe how site accessibility can function considering that the sole vehicular access point for ingress and egress will be along Madison Avenue. If necessary, a Traffic Impact Study and Circulation Plan should be submitted for review.
 - (b) This segment of North 5th Street or SR 2005 is owned and maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). Any modifications or sight improvements within the legal right-of-way for SR 2005 must be reviewed, approved and permitted by the City of Reading and PennDOT.
 - (c) The plan should be reviewed by the local emergency management responders to determine how emergency vehicles can gain access to this site.
 - (d) Site accessibility issues at 224 North 5th Street should be evaluated in further detail

These issues should be resolved prior to municipal approval, [Zoning Parts 15 and 16]

- (14) The following comments pertain to off-street parking and loading for this development:
- (a) Based upon the information presented on the proposed plan, a total of 53 off-street parking spaces will be required for the 35 residential apartment units and a total of 17 off-street parking spaces will be required for neighborhood retail or commercial use.
 - (b) There are 36 off-street parking spaces classified as on-site parking spaces and there are additional parking spaces that will be required, which are classified as off-site parking spaces. The Applicant will need to demonstrate that 34 off-site parking spaces can be reserved for off-site parking at 147 North 5th Street or at another public parking garage.
 - (c) A loading space is proposed along North 5th Street in front of the proposed retail uses.

These issues should be resolved prior to municipal approval, [Zoning Parts 15 and 16]

- (15) Note 13 on the plan also appears to conflict with the plan view. A detail for the proposed garbage dumpster, fencing and/or screening should be included on the plan. [Zoning 600-916]
- (16) The development shall be served by sanitary sewage disposal facilities. The plan should be reviewed by the departments or agencies with jurisdiction. All reservation agreements or planning requirements shall be resolved prior to municipal approval. [SALDO 515-505]
- (17) The development shall be served by municipal water supply facilities. The plan should be reviewed by the departments or agencies with jurisdiction. All reservation agreements or planning requirements shall be resolved prior to municipal approval. [SALDO 515-506]
- (18) A Stormwater Management Plan and Report was previously submitted with this application. The City Engineer in conjunction with the Department of Public Works should review the adequacy of the Stormwater Management Plan. [SALDO 515-507]
- (19) The Berks County Conservation District (BCCD) should review the adequacy of this plan prior to municipal approval. A letter of adequacy should be issued by the BCCD prior to municipal approval. [SALDO 515-507 and 515-508]
- (20) The existing cartway, curbs and sidewalks along the adjoining segments of North 5th Street are in fair condition. There are no curbs and sidewalks along this segment of Madison Avenue. The site will generate a significant amount of excavation and earth disturbance activities that will ultimately damage or destroy the existing curb and sidewalks. Streetscape enhancements should be considered in order to promote a desirable exterior appearance. Further evaluation of the existing curbs, sidewalks and other streetscape improvements should be considered by the departments or agencies with jurisdiction. [SALDO 515-502, 515-503, 515-601 and 515-602]
- (21) The Certification of Accuracy should be endorsed prior to municipal approval. [SALDO 515-403]
- (22) The Certificate of Ownership should be endorsed prior to municipal approval. [SALDO 515-403]

- (23) The City of Reading should review the plan and determine if a municipal improvements agreement should be required to ensure that all municipal improvements are properly completed by the developer. The Applicant should submit itemized cost estimates for the required municipal improvements. [515-309, 515-601 and 515-602]
- (24) The applicant is advised that this Land Development Plan may be subject to the review by other departments within the City of Reading or by other agencies with jurisdictional control.
- (25) All requirements, contributions and/or fees involving this development project should be resolved prior to municipal approval. [SALDO 515-403 and 515-703]

If you should have any questions, please contact me at (610) 775-7392 or Jerome@HawkValley.com.

Sincerely,



J. Jerome Skrinicosky, AICP
Planning Consultant to the City of Reading

copy: City of Reading Planning Commission
City of Reading Director of Community Development
City of Reading Engineer
City of Reading Zoning Administrator
City of Reading Solicitor
Fifth Street Holdings, LLC
Shuman Development Group
Ludgate Engineering Corporation