

Hawk Valley Associates, P.C.

Professional Planning, Zoning and Consultant Services

September 23, 2021

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

**RE: *Alvernia University Crime Scene Lab
Sketch Plan Application***

Dear Ms. Crimm,

Pursuant to your request, my office has reviewed the Sketch Plan Application for the Alvernia University Crime Scene Lab, which has been submitted on behalf of Alvernia University (Applicant). Based upon my review of this Sketch Plan Application, I hereby offer the following informal comments for review and consideration in accordance with the provisions specified by the City of Reading:

- (1) The Applicant proposes to convert or change the use of an existing one-family detached residential dwelling use to an educational use (Crime Scene Lab). The property is located on a 8,800 +/- square foot lot at 323 St. Bernadine Street (Tax Parcel 18530619625456).
- (2) The proposed Sketch Plan Application includes an application form a plan sheet that has been prepared by Stackhouse Bensinger as dated August 31, 2021. The Applicant has also submitted supporting documentation including a waiver request and Zoning Permit Application 2021-531 to the City of Reading.
- (3) The site is located within the R-2 Zoning District and the Institutional (INS) Overlay District. The following comments pertain to the existing and proposed uses on this property:
 - (a) The existing use is a one-family detached residential dwelling, which is a permitted use by right within the R-2 Zoning District. [Zoning 600-803.B(1)(b)]
 - (b) The proposed use is a "crime scene lab" (educational use), which is permitted by special exception within the R-2 Zoning District and by right within the INS Overlay District. The provisions for the INS Overlay District should prevail since the educational use shall be owned, operated and maintained by Alvernia University. [Zoning 600-817.C(1)(b)]
- (4) The Applicant is advised that the change of use (residential to educational) is considered as a revision to the plan of record. Therefore, a Minor Land Development Plan should be required for this project. The Minor Land Development Plan should also address neighborhood compatibility issues. [SALDO 515-301 and 515-312.B]

- (5) The following base requirements shall apply to a college or university non-residential use or “crime scene lab” (educational use) located within the INS Overlay District:

Minimum Lot Size (square feet)	Maximum Building Coverage	Maximum Impervious Coverage	Maximum Height	Minimum Lot Width	Minimum Front Yard Setback	Minimum Rear Yard Setback	Minimum Side Yard Setback
3,000	40%	70%	40 feet	30 feet	15 feet	25 feet	15 feet

Based upon the Sketch Plan that has been submitted, the existing residential building on this property does not comply with the required 15 foot side yard setback from the southern property line. Therefore, the Applicant should comply with the provisions that apply to the use and occupancy of a nonconforming building. The Applicant is advised to review this matter in further detail with the Zoning Office. [Zoning 600-803.A, 600-817.B and 600-607]

- (6) The Applicant shall be subject to the provisions for site accessibility, off-street parking and loading. The existing site conditions include a driveway that has the capacities of providing 2 off-street parking spaces. Based upon the information supplied, it appears that there should be a minimum of 4 off-street spaces plus 1 off-street loading space designated for the “crime scene lab”. Further discussion with the Zoning Office is advised to verify the proposed site conditions. If required, a zoning variance may be required to permit this use. [Zoning Parts 15 and 16]
- (7) Sidewalks may be required along the frontage of the proposed lots along St. Bernadine Street. The Planning Commission may consider a waiver of this design requirement, as specified under Section 515-503 of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. However, this design requirement is also specified under Section 600-1505 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Office should determine if a zoning variance shall be required. [Zoning 600-505]
- (8) The Applicant should provide information on the hours that the “crime scene lab” will be in use. If necessary a landscaping, lighting and solid waste management plan should be developed to consider the neighboring properties. [Zoning 600-912, 600-913, 600-916 SALDO 515-509]
- (9) The development shall be served by sanitary sewage disposal facilities. The proposed plan may be reviewed by the departments or agencies with jurisdiction. [SALDO 515-505]
- (10) The development shall be served by municipal water supply facilities. The proposed plan may be reviewed by the departments or agencies with jurisdiction. [SALDO 515-506]
- (11) A Stormwater Management Plan may be required by the City Engineer and/or the Department of Public Works for the proposed site improvements. If required, the Stormwater Management Plan should be submitted with the Minor Land Development Plan. [SALDO 515-507]
- (12) A note should be provided on the Land Development Plan indicating that a zoning permit and building permit shall be submitted for the proposed building conversion and site improvements, which shall be subject to the review and approval by the Zoning Officer, Building Code Officials and emergency management responders. [Zoning 600-807.A, 600-1101 and 600-1202.A]

- (13) A note should be provided on the Land Development Plan indicating that all proposed site improvements shall be located, designed, permitted, constructed and inspected in accordance with the provisions specified by the City of Reading. [515-309, 515-501, 515-601 and 515-602]
- (14) The applicant is advised that the Land Development Plan may be subject to the review by other departments within the City of Reading or by other agencies with jurisdictional control

The informal comments contained within this review letter are intended to provide the Applicant with guidance and direction for the submission of a formal application that may be required for zoning, land use and development compliance. A Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan should be submitted as a formal application for review by the City of Reading Planning Commission.

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

Sincerely,



J. Jerome Skrincosky, 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 Department of Public Works
City of Reading Zoning Administrator
City of Reading Solicitor
Alvernia University
Stackhouse Bensinger



