

IN RE: APPEAL OF SI HOLDINGS IV, LLC, RELATIVE TO A PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1420 AND 1430 N. 13TH STREET, CITY OF READING, BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA	: BEFORE THE ZONING HEARING : BOARD OF THE CITY OF READING, : PENNSYLVANIA : : APPEAL NO. 2504-0015 : : VARIANCE, INTERPRETATION : AND/OR SPECIAL EXCEPTION
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**DECISION OF THE ZONING HEARING
BOARD OF THE CITY OF READING**

AND NOW, this 11th day of June, 2025, a hearing having been held on May 14, 2025, upon the application of SI Holdings IV, LLC, a Pennsylvania Limited Liability Company, notice of such hearing having been first sent and advertised in accordance with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and the City of Reading Zoning Ordinance, as amended, the Zoning Hearing Board of the City of Reading (hereinafter referred to as the “Zoning Board”) renders the following decision:

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Zoning Board finds the following facts:

1. Applicant is SI Holdings IV, LLC, a Pennsylvania Limited Liability Company, with a principal mailing address of 5020 Pentridge Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19143 (hereinafter referred to as the “Applicant”).
2. Applicant is the fee simple owner of property located at 1420 and 1430 N. 13th Street, City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania 19604 (hereinafter referred to as the “Subject Property”).
3. The Subject Property is located in the R-2 Residential Zoning District as that term and district is defined by the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Reading, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the “Zoning Ordinance”).
4. Applicant was represented by Alexander Elliker, Esquire, of 316 West Main Street,

Kutztown, Pennsylvania.

5. Applicant is requesting a special exception to adaptively reuse a previous institutional use (multifamily apartment building for Albright College students having 124 beds) for a non-collegiate multifamily apartment building with thirty-eight (38) units under Section 600-803.B.3. and Section 600-1202.

6. Applicant also seeks relief under Section 600-1202.A.10.c. which allows Applicant to seek a reduction of the parking and/or loading space requirements of Section 600-1603.A.31.d. as part of the requested special exception.

7. In the event the Zoning Board does not consider a reduction of the required off-street parking spaces, Applicant requests a variance from Section 600-1603.A.31.d. to reduce the required fifty-seven (57) off-street parking spaces to twenty-one (21) off-street parking spaces as proposed due to existing conditions and on-street availability.

8. The Subject Property consists of two (2) lots under common ownership developed with an existing four-story brick masonry building constructed in 1931 and a parking lot.

9. 1420 N. 13th Street consists of approximately 0.18 acres and 1430 N. 13th Street consists of approximately 0.24 acres (Tax Parcel Nos. 17531730281203 and 17531730281302).

10. Applicant stated Albright College used the building on the Subject Property from the 1950's until it abandoned the dormitories in 2023. Applicant believes the building was originally used as a non-collegiate apartment building prior to its use a dormitory.

11. Applicant stated the proposed thirty-eight (38) apartments would include nine (9) studios, twenty-three (23) one-bedroom units and five (5) two-bedroom units, all meeting the minimum square footage requirements.

12. Applicant stated the proposed use would provide market rate housing for the community, while occupying and preserving a beautiful and important nearly 100-year-old

building that currently is vacant.

13. Applicant stated that the College Heights area where the Subject Property is located consists mostly of single-family homes and range in size from three (3) to five (5) bedrooms and Applicant desires to create new housing for those in College Heights that do not need a three (3) or four (4) bedroom house.

14. Applicant stated it will be retaining the historic elevator with some modernization and are also keeping a majority of the original fire hall routes.

15. Applicant stated the building is in the process of obtaining national historic preservation certification with the applicable government agencies as the building has a special history and is a rare example of Spanish Revival style in the city.

16. Applicant stated it has designed an improved parking lot with twenty-one (21) spaces and a completed parking study confirms there would be sufficient parking at and around the Subject Property to serve the community and future tenants of the building.

17. Applicant stated the existing layout of the Subject Property is a unique and physical circumstance and condition peculiar to the Subject Property creating an unnecessary hardship which has not been created by Applicant.

18. Applicant stated that due to the unnecessary hardship, the Subject Property cannot be developed with fifty-seven (57) off-street parking spaces in strict conformity with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance without demolishing part of the building or conducting costly and major development.

19. Applicant stated the proposed adaptive reuse:

a. Will not substantially increase traffic and congestion nor will it create any undo concentration of population;

b. Will not impair or create a significant threat to the public health and safety;

c. Will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent properties;
and

d. Is not detrimental to the appropriate use of adjacent property and will not generate significant nuisances of hazards.

20. There were no objections to the requested relief and Linda Kelleher, on behalf of the College Heights Community Council, spoke in favor of the requested relief.

DISCUSSION

Applicant is requesting a special exception to adaptively reuse a previous institutional use (multifamily apartment building for Albright College students having 124 beds) for a non-collegiate multifamily apartment building with thirty-eight (38) units under Section 600-803.B.3. and Section 600-1202. Applicant also seeks relief under Section 600-1202.A.10.c. which allows Applicant to seek a reduction of the parking and/or loading space requirements of Section 600-1603.A.31.d. as part of the requested special exception. In the event the Zoning Board does not consider a reduction of the required off-street parking spaces, Applicant requests a variance from Section 600-1603.A.31.d. to reduce the required fifty-seven (57) off-street parking spaces to twenty-one (21) off-street parking spaces as proposed due to existing conditions and on-street availability.

The Zoning Board finds the proposed use will not be a detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood and is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Ordinance.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Applicant is SI Holdings IV, LLC, a Pennsylvania Limited Liability Company
2. The Subject Property is located at 1420 and 1430 N. 13th Street, Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania.
3. The Subject Property is located in the R-2 Residential Zoning District.

4. The Zoning Board is permitted to provide interpretation and grant applications for variances and special exceptions as set forth in the relevant sections of the Zoning Ordinance.

5. The Zoning Board incorporates the findings of fact as though fully set forth at length herein.

6. In order to grant the requested relief, the Applicant must show it has satisfied the relevant sections of the Zoning Ordinance.

7. After reviewing the Applicant's request in detail, the Zoning Hearing Board enters the following Decision:

a. Applicant is granted relief from all relevant sections of the Zoning Ordinance, subject to the following conditions:

(1) Applicant shall comply with all pertinent provisions for Adaptive Reuse considering the Residential Apartment Uses, as prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance.

(2) A Preliminary Land Development Plan, if necessary, shall be prepared to address the provisions required by the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (Chapter 515 of the City of Reading Code).

(3) A Final Land Development Plan, if necessary, shall be prepared for approval by the City of Reading and recorded with the Berks County Recorder of Deeds.

(4) All sanitary sewage disposal issues shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the City of Reading, including the reservation, permitting, installation and connection of the required sanitary sewage disposal improvements.

(5) All water supply issues shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the City of Reading, including the reservation, permitting, installation and connection of the required water supply improvements.

(6) All proposed signs shall be located, designed, permitted and

installed in accordance with the provisions specified by the City of Reading.

(7) The appropriate building and zoning permits shall be prepared and submitted to address all building code requirements for the proposed residential apartment units.

(8) The building shall comply with all fire, safety and accessibility requirements specified by the City of Reading prior to occupancy.

(9) Applicant shall comply with all relevant building and occupancy codes and ordinances as well as the plans and testimony submitted before the Zoning Board.

(10) Applicant may not use, expand, alter or otherwise use the Subject Property inconsistently with the contents of this Decision without making application requesting further relief from the Zoning Board.

(11) Failure to comply with any of the above-referenced conditions shall mean the immediate revocation of the relief granted herein.

The decision of this Board is by a vote of 5 to 0 .

**ZONING HEARING BOARD OF THE
CITY OF READING**

/s/ Philip Rabena

PHILIP RABENA, CHAIRPERSON

/s/ Thomas Fox

THOMAS FOX

/s/ Jeffrey Gattone

JEFFREY GATTONE

/s/ Jared Barcz

JARED BARCZ

/s/ Charles Jones

CHARLES JONES