

March 9, 2021

Ms. Kathi Clayton
President
Chestnut Hill Community Association
8434 Germantown Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19118

Dear Ms. Clayton:

We are writing regarding the proposed development at 10 Bethlehem Pike, and to seek the support of the Chestnut Hill Community Association for changes to the developer's proposal which would help ensure that the redevelopment of this site replaces the utilitarian gas station building currently on the site with a more attractive structure that is a better fit for our neighborhood.

All of us live on the streets which would be most directly affected by the proposal – Summit Street, Bethlehem Pike, East Chestnut Hill Avenue, Evergreen Place, Prospect Avenue, or Germantown Avenue. We pass by this site on an almost daily basis. We are not at all opposed to a responsible redevelopment of this site, but we feel that such development represents an opportunity to build a building that respects and engages with the existing architectural context of the community.

Most of Chestnut Hill was designated by the federal government as a National Historic District in 1987 in consideration of an architectural heritage that the National Park Service recognized as “a community tied to its natural surroundings, scaled to the human form, and exquisitely planned and detailed with an eye not simply toward grandeur but a rustic, comfortable elegance.” The beauty, walkability, and scale of this neighborhood is what makes it special and why we live here.

Notwithstanding this, we all recognize that some of the 20th century commercial structures built in Chestnut Hill, including the Sunoco stations that have been located at 10 Bethlehem Pike for nearly a century, did not fit well into the broader architectural fabric of the Chestnut Hill community. For this reason, a well-executed redevelopment of the site is something that we welcome. However, the proposal that was presented at the Tuesday, February 23rd Zoom meeting convened by the CHCA falls short in several respects, including:

- The massive height and scale of the proposed building and lack of sufficient set-backs, terraces, or other relief from the street;
- The materials proposed to be used for the building, which do not include the schist and brick typical of buildings in Chestnut Hill and employed in other recent developments such as One West, or windows and doors which complement the look of the other window and door fenestrations seen in the neighborhood;
- The inadequate parking proposed for a 34 unit apartment building which also is proposed to include a commercial space that would generate further demand for parking;
- Potential for the structure to further exacerbate problems with stormwater runoff currently affecting the Baptist church graveyard and some houses on the south side of Summit Street

- Unanswered questions regarding the potential for soil contamination on the site, adverse impacts on light and air flow to adjacent properties, impacts of construction activities on nearby residents, and management of disposal of trash generated by the proposed 34 residential and one commercial unit at the site.

While the developer has claimed that their initial plan was “by right” we have consulted with a zoning lawyer whose analysis is that it is not “by right.” The enclosure attached to this letter sets forth the specific problems with this design.

In light of these concerns, we respectfully request that the CHCA review the attachment to this letter which identifies provisions of the zoning code that developer’s “by right” proposal does not appear to comply with, or, where there is at present insufficient information to determine whether it is in fact compliant. We request that the CHCA oppose any attempt by the developer to move forward on this plan, as we do not believe it to meet the criteria to actually be “by right.”

In addition, we request that the CHCA work with us and the developer to require that any alternative design plan for redevelopment of this property will:

- Ensure that the building’s design takes proper account of historical considerations relating to the site’s location in a neighborhood listed as a National Historic District;
- Ensure that the developer undertake sunlight studies so that we can see what the impact of the proposed structure would be on the sunlight available to surrounding properties;
- Secure commitments from the developer to address concerns about the height and mass of the proposed building, and the materials and fenestrations used, so that it better complements the architectural fabric of the Chestnut Hill Historic District;
- Ensure that any impacts from stormwater runoff or possible soil contamination at the property are addressed;
- Ensure that adequate parking either at the site or in close proximity to it is secured, so that the nearby residential streets are not overwhelmed with vehicles belonging to residents of the proposed building, their guests, and employees and customers of the proposed commercial property;
- Evaluate how this building and its various tenants will impact our utilities infrastructure, including electric, gas, sewer and water. Keep the community informed about the construction timeline, time of work, and staging and laydown areas, protection of neighboring properties, mitigation of noise and pollution during construction;
- Ensure neighbors are provided a survey indicating the exact location of lot lines;
- Ensure studies are undertaken on possible soil contamination at the site, impacts of the project on sewage, water pressure, trash, litter management, traffic, expected occupancy levels (retail and residential); and
- Ensure mitigation of privacy and light effects on adjacent/near-adjacent residential neighbors (8 Summit and 8622 Evergreen Place).

We look forward to working with the CHCA and the developer to address these issues in good faith, and we would like to emphasize that we view redevelopment of 10 Bethlehem Pike as an opportunity to enhance the beauty and livability of the community we have made our home.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Duncan
Kristen Regina
Cynthia D'Amico
Pascal Zimmer
Conrod Robinson
Devon Carberry
Alex Farragut
Daniel Piotrowski
Kim Whetzel
Barbara Baumbach
Kathlyn Egan
Geno Germano
J. Bradley McDermott
Ed Gibson
Sandra M. McGinn
Linda Thompson
Steven B. Erisoty
Andrew Clayton
Nicole Qualls
Jim Wallace
Ann Crane
William Miles
Patrick Moran
Anne McNally

Maureen Pie-Bruno
James Bruno
Lyn Buchheit
William Barone
John Leonard
Ryan Farragut
Nancy Anderson
Rodney Poe
Will Whetzel
Maryalice Coney
John Egan
Ken Schotsch
Maryjo McDermott
Laurentine Fromm
Marcea Driscoll
Keith Thompson
Maxine Dornermann
Seth Coombs
Ian Doyle
John Belmont
Tom Loring
Seth McDowell
Karen Moran

David Mercuris
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Melissa Degenhardt
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Zach Davis
Merry Heim
Cliff Baumbach
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Ashley Brenner
Thomas F. McGinn
Jude Driscoll
Avery Bissel
Michele Clayton
Yvette Coombs
Mary M. Zell
Jennifer Livingston
Meg McNally
Diane McDowell