

**IN RE: APPEAL OF READING HILL, : BEFORE THE ZONING HEARING
LLC, RELATIVE TO A PROPERTY : BOARD OF THE CITY OF READING,
LOCATED AT 1400 HILL ROAD, : PENNSYLVANIA
CITY OF READING, BERKS :
COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA : APPEAL NO. 2023-30
:
: VARIANCE, INTERPRETATION
: AND/OR SPECIAL EXCEPTION**

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

AND NOW, this 13th day of November, 2023, a hearing having been held on October 25, 2023, upon the application of Reading Hill, LLC, 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 Reading Hill, LLC, a Pennsylvania Limited Liability Company, with a principal mailing address of 140 Remsen Street, 2nd Floor, Brooklyn, New York 11201 (hereinafter referred to as the “Applicant”).
2. Applicant is the fee simple owner of the property located at 1400 Hill Road, City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania (hereinafter referred to as the “Subject Property”).
3. The Subject Property is located in the R-3 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 Mark H. Koch, Esquire.

5. Applicant is seeking a special exception for adaptive reuse to establish 78 dwelling units at the Subject Property, or in the alternative, seeks a change from one nonconforming use to another nonconforming use.

6. Applicant also seeks a variance for the required square footage requirements for the dwelling units and a variance for the number of required off-street parking spaces and drive aisles proposed for 1500 Eckert Avenue, limit of one principal use per lot, and any other relief required to support the project.

7. Applicant is seeking relief from the following Zoning Ordinance Sections: 600-607, 600-1202, 600-804, 600-807, 600-902, 600-1101-1102, 600-1201.A., 600-1602, 600-1603.A., 600-1603, 600-1604, and any other sections required to effectuate Applicant's submitted plans.

8. The Subject Property is the former Central Catholic High School which has been vacant since 2011.

9. The storage units may be utilized to satisfy the square footage requirements.

10. The storage units satisfy the square footage requirements for the apartment units.

11. The requested floorplan maintains the integrity of the former Central Catholic building(s) and the Linden Mansion.

12. Applicant has sufficient real property to comply with the off-street parking requirements.

13. Applicant did not provide any reason it cannot provide 117 off-street parking spaces.

14. Applicant testified the requested relief will not substantially increase traffic and congestion compared to the prior use of the Subject Property nor will it create any undo concentration of population.

15. Applicant believes the proposed development will not impair or create a significant threat to the public health and safety.

DISCUSSION

Applicant is seeking a special exception for adaptive reuse to establish 78 dwelling units at the Subject Property, or in the alternative, seeks a change from one nonconforming use to another nonconforming use. Applicant also seeks a variance for the required square footage requirements for the dwelling units and a variance for the number of required off-street parking spaces and drive aisles proposed for 1500 Eckert Avenue, limit of one principal use per lot, and any other relief required to support the project. 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 as long as Applicant complies with the conditions set forth below.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Applicant is Reading Hill, LLC.
2. The Subject Property is located at 1400 Hill Road, Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania.
3. The Subject Property is located in the R-3 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 provide proof of designated off-street parking of 1.5 spaces per unit.

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

(11) 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.

(12) 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, CHAIRMAN

/s/ Thomas Fox

THOMAS FOX

/s/ Jeffrey Gattone

JEFFREY GATTONE

/s/ William Harst

WILLIAM HARST

/s/ Jared Barcz

JARED BARCZ