

September 28, 2026
Ref: #3701-186

Newtown Township
100 Municipal Drive
Newtown, PA 18940

Attention: Micah Lewis, Township Manager

Reference: 661 Penn Street, LLC – 661 Penn Street & 638 Newtown Yardley Road
TMP Nos. 29-010-037 & 29-010-119-001
Preliminary Land Development and Lot Consolidation
Newtown Project No. NT260004

Dear Micah:

We have received the application for Preliminary Land Development at the above-referenced properties. The applicant proposes to consolidate two parcels - TMP No. 29-010-137 and 29-010-119-001 into a 15.7-acre (gross)/15.4-acre (net) lot in the LI-Light Industrial and O-LI Office Light Industrial Zoning Districts. These properties are also subject to the Newtown Commons Overlay District.

The submission consists of a 33 sheet set of land development plans and Truck Turning plans consisting of 2 sheets. All plans are prepared by Gilmore and Associates, Inc. and are dated January 21, 2026, with latest revisions dated July 27, 2026. The applicant proposes to demolish an existing one-story office building on TMP No. 29-010-037 which fronts on Penn Street (T-338), and retain three existing office buildings to be known as Buildings 2, 3 and 4 on parcel TMP No. 29-010-119-001 which front on Newtown Yardley Road (T-563). The proposed improvements include two, four-story apartment buildings (Building 1A and Building 1B) with 308 apartment dwellings, an internal four-story parking garage (Garage 1) providing 504 spaces, an outdoor swimming pool, courtyards adjacent to Buildings 1A and 1B, a public space plaza near the access to Newtown-Yardley Road, and a four-story plus rooftop parking garage (Garage 2) providing 301 spaces. The site accesses at Penn Street and Newtown Yardley Road will be maintained. The development is contingent upon vacating a 100-foot-wide utility easement which parallels the existing interior property line that is to be extinguished by the lot consolidation. The proposed mixed-use development is presently and will continue to be served by existing public sanitary sewer and water service.

I. ZONING ORDINANCE

1. The proposed J-1 use, a mixed-use development, is permitted by conditional use in the Newtown Commons Overlay District. Our review of the conditional use is provided under separate cover. (700-A.8.C.1.a)

2. The plans must be revised to list the party(ies) to whom the existing 100-foot utility easement is granted in favor of. All parties must agree to vacation of the easement. Presently, this area is shown to contain parking areas, plantings, and the emergency spillway of a stormwater basin. The proposed development within this area will include a portion of Building 1A, a pool deck, trail, sidewalks, and driveways, including the westerly path intended as emergency fire vehicle access.
3. The parking calculations in the Record Plan Notes state that 120, one-bedroom and 188, two-bedroom apartment units are proposed. The applicant should confirm if any efficiency/studio apartment units are proposed. We recommended this unit type be included in Buildings 1A and 1B to be consistent with the Common Overlay District requirements. A floor plan should be provided to confirm the dwelling unit types, distribution and layout for Buildings 1A and 1B. (700-A.8.A.4)

The parking calculations in the Record Plan Notes should state the use designation (D-1/D-2) of the existing buildings for clarity and the existing building numbers listed in the calculations should be corrected.

4. Per the asterisked plan note, the gross floor areas are based on a 2007 Record Plan and are used to calculate non-residential parking requirements. The applicant and Zoning Officer must verify that these remain accurate in order to calculate the required number of parking spaces. Further, the area of each use per floor should be listed on the plan.
5. The total required number of parking spaces per the Parking Calculation on Sheet 3 is 1,002 spaces and the calculation notes 1,040 are proposed. We note this quantity could be subject to change based upon preceding comment nos. 3 and 4 regarding office types/areas and bedrooms per dwelling.

The quantity of standard and van-accessible ADA compliant spaces must be tabulated on the plans to document and confirm compliance with Township ordinances. We count 20 spaces in Garage 1 and 14 outdoor spaces on Sheet 2, which may be deficient based upon the total number of parking spaces provided. (803.D and 803.J.J-1.4.b and 1001B)

6. The existing buildings and proposed Building 1A exceed the maximum allowable front yard setback of 25 feet. A variance will be required for the proposed Building 1A. We defer to the Township Zoning Officer for the applicability of this requirement to existing buildings which pre-date the overlay district's adoption in 2024. (700-A.8.D.1)
7. The Commons Overlay District has a maximum allowable height of 50 feet, but this height must include all rooftop equipment and parapets. The height of proposed Buildings 1A and 1B, Garage 1 and Garage 2, should clearly be noted in the zoning table on Sheet 3. The height of the existing buildings should also be noted to document and assess on-site existing non-conforming conditions. As both Garage 1 and Garage 2 are to be four stories with rooftop parking levels, enclosed or roofed over access stairways would also be counted toward building height. (700-A.8.D.1 Footnote 1)

8. Architectural renderings showing proposed exterior walls that face a street, parking area, or walkway must be provided. Blank walls are not permitted and architectural treatments shall be consistent with the front façade's architectural style, materials, fenestration and details. (700-A.8.E.4.b)
9. In addition to the proposed landscaping and sidewalks, the development must provide benches, bicycle racks, directional and wayfinding signage, and appropriate access management to ensure safe and convenient circulation, as approved by the Township Board of Supervisors. There appear to be only two benches along the walking path east of proposed Buildings 1A and 1B and only one bench proposed next to the Building 1A entrance. (700-A.8.E.5.a)
10. The Newtown-Yardley Road frontage is along the SEPTA Route 130 bus route. The Township should determine if an additional stop should be placed near the site entrance or if any bus stop infrastructure upgrades are warranted to existing nearby stops to support the expected significant increase in residential population. (700-A.8.E.5.b)
11. The applicant should justify how the public open space meets ordinance criteria and provides public amenities. While the minimum 5% area has been met, the proposed improvements are limited to an 8-foot-wide path which meanders along the edge of an above-ground stormwater management basin east of Building 1 with two benches and an additional public space proposed directly west of existing Building 3. We recommend this public space be expanded into the Newtown-Yardley Road frontage to support pedestrians using the existing roadside trail system. The square footage of this area noted on Sheet 2 should be clarified/corrected. We recommend the public space be provided at multiple locations, and include some improvement at the Newtown Yardley Road frontage such as a village green or plaza with clock tower to support pedestrians using the existing roadside trail system. (700-A.8.E.6.b and .c)
12. The proposed tree layout and lighting design should be coordinated and adjusted, as appropriate, along the western property buffer to reduce conflict between trees and proposed lighting. (700-A.8.E.7.d)
13. Landscaping shall be integrated with other functional and ornamental site design elements, where appropriate, such as recreational facilities, ground paving materials, paths and walkways, fountains or other water features, trellises, pergolas, gazebos, fences, walls, street furniture, art, and sculptures. The applicant should provide a written response outlining how the proposed landscape design meets the intent of this requirement. (700-A.8.E.7.c.1)
14. Plant suitability, maintenance, and compatibility with site and construction features are critical factors that shall be considered. Planting shall be designed with repetition, structured patterns, and complimentary textures and colors, and shall reinforce the overall character of the area. The applicant should provide a written response outlining how the proposed landscape design meets the intent of this requirement. (700-A.8.E.7.c.2)
15. Outdoor refuse storage locations must be identified for existing and proposed buildings and uses. (700-A.8.E.7.b)

16. The majority of the length of the proposed 8-foot-wide walking path east of proposed building 1A and 1B does not provide any lighting. Luminaries must be proposed along the entire pedestrian path. (700-A.8.E.7.d)
17. Upon consolidation of the two parcels, the site will front on two opposing streets creating a “through lot”. The plan shows the remaining yards as side yards which is what the previous land development approvals showed for the two existing lots. The Zoning Officer should confirm the side yards (and no rear yards) with the lot consolidation. The J-1 mixed-use development use requires all parking to be located to the interior side of buildings and the Commons Overlay District requires all parking to be in the side or rear yard, not in the front yard or in front of buildings. (700-A.8.D.1 and 700-A.8.E.9.b)
18. The applicant must clearly note where the impervious surface of the pool and north entrance plaza (public space) area is counted in their Post-Development Impervious Surface Summary on Sheet 3. The total square footage of Building 5 post construction should be confirmed. (803.H.H-8.12)
19. Fifteen parking spaces south of Building 2 will encroach the westerly side yard. The side yard setback of existing parking must be provided.
20. The plans must be revised to provide compliance with the tree protection standards. The tree protection zone boundary should be clearly indicated on the plans. (903.B.6.b)
21. All mechanical and electrical equipment not enclosed in a structure shall be fully and completely screened from view from any point and in a manner compatible with the architectural and landscaping style of the remainder of the lot. Such screening shall be subject to site plan and architectural review by the municipality. We note screening of a proposed electrical transformer is proposed near a drop-off lane near Building 1A. Additional architectural information is necessary to review compliance. (1003.C.3)
22. A completely planted visual barrier or landscape screen, which cannot be seen through and of sufficient height is required at the western property line between this site and the cemetery which is a residentially zoned district. The landscape plan was revised to include plantings along the western property line. The planting design must be revised to provide additional plantings to furnish a landscape screen which can't be seen through. In addition, species must be from the approved plant materials list. A note conforming to 1003.B.4 should be placed on the Record Plan. (1003)

II. SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

The following comments are based upon the provisions of the Newtown Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SLDO):

1. While not required due to lot width, we recommend luminaries A or B be installed along the Newtown Yardley Road frontage for improved visibility along the existing paved roadside trail and to enhance the gateway transition from the Township to the Borough. Installation height and manufacturer's style should be coordinated with that of existing fixtures at Newtown

Walk on TMP No. 29-010-055-003. Two light fixtures are proposed along the access driveway from Newtown-Yardley Road that provide only minor changes to the illumination of the driveway compared to the previous submission. Additional lighting should be provided. (513.5)

2. We have the following circulation concerns:
 - a. The revised plans depict directional arrows to indicate the driveway south of Building 4 is intended for one-way eastbound traffic. Additional signage such as Do Not Enter signs should be provided to indicate to motorists that it is a single direction driveway for improved circulation to the parking garage and to minimize points of conflict at the garage egress drive due to left-hand turns and parked vehicles from either row of nine or five parking spaces. (514.12)
 - b. The egress from the Building 1A drop-off driveway loop should be aligned with Drive C to create a four-way intersection.
3. Nothing shall be permitted to be placed, planted, set, or put within the area of an easement. If the existing on-site easement is not able to be vacated, a waiver from this section may be required. (520.5)
4. The Fire Marshal must approve the proposed fire hydrant locations and spacing. (523.4)
5. Grade changes and excavations shall not encroach upon the tree protection zone. Disturbance is proposed within the canopy of at least two existing trees shown to remain. (629.2.C.1.a)
6. Tree species proposed within the two sumped islands north of Building 1A should be revised to be wet-tolerant trees. (529.4)
7. Proposed tree species for detention basin perimeter plantings must be from the approved list. (529.3.C)
8. Three shrub species are proposed for parking lot perimeter screening, as well as screening of a proposed electrical transformer near Building 1A and are not included on the Township-approved buffer/screening plant lists. A waiver must be requested or a different species used. (531.5.)
9. The Board of Supervisors must consider the adequacy of existing and proposed community facilities and if dedication of any lands for the same is necessary as part of this large scale residential development. The Board may also make recommendations regarding the proposed public space at stormwater Basin No. 2. (532)
10. The method of preservation and maintenance of the proposed public space must be coordinated with the Township. Note 28 on Sheet 3 should be revised to include dedication of the two public facilities. (533)

11. Facades for multi-family buildings may not exceed a length-to-height ratio of five to one. The ratio must be calculated for Building 1A and 1B and clearly stated on the plan. (535.7)
12. Collection stations for refuse must be detailed, if provided. Note 26 on Sheet 3 indicates that trash and recycling stations are to be located within the building and accessed by Garage 1 with appropriately sized vehicles. The indoor locations of these stations should be clarified to verify adequate and convenient access for both collectors and residents and an accompanying floor plan should be provided. We note that no turning templates are provided for waste hauling vehicles within Garage 1. (535.8)
13. The applicant requests waivers from the Newtown Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance as follows:
 - a. From Section 402.3.B and C which requires existing features within 400 feet of the property to be field surveyed.
 - b. From Section 514.4 which requires pedestrian crosswalks and refuge islands to be provided at intervals not exceeding 200 feet.
 - c. From Section 514.9 which requires the edge of parking area to not be closer than 20 feet to the outside wall of the nearest building.
 - d. From Section 521.3.B which requires the minimum diameter of storm drainage pipe to be 15 inches or equivalent thereto.
 - e. From Section 521.5.I which requires a collecting swale to be provided to drain basins for use in recreation.
 - f. From Section 529.5 which requires a minimum of one, 2-in. caliper shade tree, one, 4-5 foot evergreen tree, two flowering trees, or eight, 2-3 foot shrubs for each dwelling unit in a multi-family development.
 - g. From Section 530 to enable existing street trees to be counted towards the street tree requirement.

III. GENERAL ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS

The following items are general engineering considerations pertaining to the project that were noted by our office during the course of review of the Preliminary Plan submission:

1. The nature of resident amenities within the Building 1B courtyards should be discussed with the Township and noted on future plans.
2. Per the Zoning Ordinance, any pool or water area subject thereto shall be suitably designed, located, and maintained so as not to become a nuisance or hazard either to adjoining property owners or the public generally. While the outdoor swimming pool may not pose a public hazard, it could be a nuisance due to potential noise that could detract from the solemnity of interment ceremonies or visitations. A noise barrier should be considered to

separate these uses. We note that a 22-ft.-wide landscape buffer has been provided. A 25-ft.-wide buffer is required from residential zoned district that are adjacent to but not within the Common Overlay District.(803.H.H-8.2)

3. Due to the proposed size of Buildings 1A and 1B, loading areas must be shown on the plans.
4. We recommend this development be submitted to Newtown Borough for their review of the traffic impact to Penn Street.
5. The Supplemental Plaza Plantings table on Sheet 13 notes two black locust plantings whereas the table on Sheet 12 notes these plantings are willow oak. Both tables should be revised to reflect the proposed planting arrangement in the north entrance plaza. These discrepancies must be addressed.

Very truly yours,
ARRO Consulting, Inc.
Township Planner



Michele A. Fountain, PE

MAF/klk

cc: Katherine McGovern, Assistant Township Manager (via email)
Newtown Township Zoning Officer (via email)
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