

Planning & Real Estate Consultants

May 11, 2021

Planning Board  
Township of Berkeley Heights  
29 Park Avenue  
Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922

**Re: Planning Review #1  
Application SP-1-21  
Preliminary and Final Site Plan  
Block 4301, Lot 1.02  
100 Connell Drive  
Connell Corporate Center I, LLC  
OR-B Zone**

Dear Chairman Johnson and Members of the Board:

Our office is in receipt of the above referenced application, including the following documents submitted by the applicant:

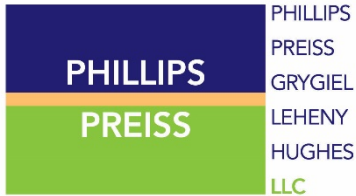
- Application for Site Plan Approval including Site Plan Checklist, dated 2/2/2021.
- Landscape Architecture Plans entitled "Preliminary and Final Site Plan Application for: 100 Connell Drive Site Improvements," prepared by Arterial, dated 2/3/2021, last revised 3/18/2021.
- Site Plans entitled "100 Connell Drive Site Improvements Preliminary and Final Site Plan Application," prepared by Langan, dated 2/3/2021, last revised 3/18/2021.
- Partial Boundary & Topographic Survey entitled "Connell Corporate Park," prepared by Langan, dated 5/22/2018, last revised 11/20/2020.

The applicant is seeking preliminary and final major site plan approval to replace the sidewalks that connect to and surround the 100 Connell building and make renovations to the existing paver area by the northwestern corner of the building.

#### **Site and Location**

The subject property is an approximately 40-acre portion of the Connell Corporate Park. The site has frontage along I-78 to the north, Oak Way to the east, and the boundary line between Berkeley Heights and Watchung to the south. Connell Drive traverses the property along the southern lot line.

The property is commonly known as 100 Connell Drive, and is improved with an office building in the center. Surface parking lots surround the building on all sides. Vehicular



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access is provided via multiple driveways on Connell Drive, as well as on Oak Way and from the western portion of the Connell Corporate Park. The central driveway on Connell Drive extends into a turnaround in front of the main entrance. Sidewalks are provided along Connell Drive and around the surface parking lots to offer pedestrian access into the building. There is a paver area by the northwestern corner of the building.

**Proposed Development**

The paver area by the northwestern corner of the building will be renovated to have new pavers, an outdoor fireplace, a buffer/catering station, a shade pavilion, and built-in bench and sofas. A raised planter area and new trees will enclose the area to the south. To the north of this area, there will be an elevated amenity area accessible via concrete treads and lawn steps that will be equipped with built-in benches and enclosed by retaining walls and raised planter areas. There will also be a rubber exercise surface slightly to the southwest of the main amenity area.

The applicant will also replace existing sidewalks with new sidewalks with monolithic curbs. The sidewalks along the surface parking lots will be mostly 4-foot wide, and extend to 6.7-feet in width by the ADA parking spaces in the northern parking lot. New 5-foot wide sidewalks with stairs will connect the western building entrance with the perimeter sidewalk. The northern and southern entrance areas, where the overhead structures will be removed, will be constructed with new paving and provided with new landscaping to create small entrance plaza areas. New plantings will also be provided along the new sidewalks and the along the building facades.

There are also several ancillary improvements, including an enclosed HVAC equipment area to the north of the amenity space, new wheelstops and curbs along the ADA parking spaces in the northern parking lot, repair of existing granite cobble curbs by the northern entrance, repair of existing Belgian block curbs by the southern entrance, and new decorative lighting by the new entrance plaza area for the southern entrance.

**Compliance**

The subject property, at the time of submission of this application, was designated within the OR-B Office and Research zone. No change is proposed to the use, the building footprint, total number of parking spaces, vehicular circulation, or signs. As such, no use or bulk variances have been identified at this time.

Additional information is requested for the following item to confirm compliance with general design standards:

- §10.6.1.D: The applicant should provide a photometric illumination analysis and provide details regarding the proposed outdoor decorative lighting to



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demonstrate compliance with lighting standards. If deviations are identified, the applicant shall request design waiver(s) accordingly.

### Planning Comments

1. Pursuant to the “Time of Application Rule” at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-10.5, the application shall be reviewed under the standards of the OR-B zone, which was the designated zoning district of the subject property at the time of filing. For reference purposes only, we note that the subject property is currently zoned in the MU Mixed-Use zone, which was adopted via ordinance on 3/2/2021; the application is also consistent with use and bulk requirements of the MU zone.
2. The applicant should provide details regarding the proposed HVAC equipment and enclosure, including dimensions, height, materials and construction details, and equipment specifications. The applicant should also provide testimony on potential visual and noise impacts of the equipment. We defer to the Board Engineer on additional comments regarding this issue.
3. The applicant should provide testimony on the operations of the proposed amenity space, including its purpose, hours of operation, maximum capacity, and any restrictions on usage (100 Connell employees? Open to the public?)
4. The applicant should provide testimony on how it will satisfy the tree replacement requirements at §12.16.050. We note that the proposed plantings as shown on the Landscape Architecture Plans comply with planting size requirements in 10.6.3.F.2. If the application is approved, we recommend to include a condition that the applicant will obtain necessary tree removal permits prior to construction.
5. We additionally defer to the Township engineer for comments regarding the proposed sidewalks, lighting, paving and grading, drainage and irrigation, and other construction details.

We trust that the above information is responsive to your needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Keenan Hughes, AICP, PP