

**ZONING HEARING BOARD OF DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP  
BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**Application No.** Z-3-2014

**Applicant:** Pennsford, LLC  
2374 Geneva Avenue  
Glenside, PA 19038

**Owners:** Briar Rose Inc.  
1304 Highland Avenue  
Fort Washington, PA 19034

**Subject  
Property:** Tax Parcel No. 9-14-32, being the Warrington Country Club  
Banquet Facilities located at 1360 Almshouse Road, Warrington,  
PA, 18976.

**Requested  
Relief:** The Applicant requests a variance from §175-72.B(5) of the  
Doylestown Township Zoning Ordinance (“Ordinance”) to  
permit a canopy to be erected which will sit less than 75 feet  
from the required front yard setback from the right-of-way of  
Almshouse Road.

**Hearing  
History:** The application was filed in Doylestown Township on September  
9, 2014. The hearing was held on October 20, 2014 at the  
Doylestown Township Building, 425 Wells Road, Doylestown,  
PA 18901.

**Appearances:** Applicant by: Edward Wild, Esquire  
Benner & Wild  
174 West State Street  
Doylestown, PA 18901

**Date of Issuance:** November 13, 2014

## DECISION

### FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The Zoning Hearing Board of Doylestown Township met the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, the Municipalities Planning Code, and other relevant statutes as to legal notice of the hearing held.

2. The Applicant is the tenant at the Subject Property with an option to purchase the property and is therefore possessed of the requisite standing to make application to this Board.

3. The Subject Property is located in the C-2 Zoning District of Doylestown Township, and it has previously been established that the use is E-18, Banquet Facility, a use that is not permitted in the C-2 Zoning District.

4. Therefore, the proposed use is an existing nonconformity of long standing.

5. The Board introduced as exhibits A-1, the application before the Board, A-2, a grading plan of Showalter and Associates dated January 13, 2012, A-3, an architectural drawing of Philips and Donovan, and A-4, a Notice of Advertising of the hearing.

6. The hearing was turned over to Edward Wild, Esquire who conducted the hearing on behalf of the Applicant.

7. Sworn for the Applicant was Wayne Ford, a general manager of Pennsford, LLC, and Joseph Philips, the architect who has worked with regard to certain renovations.

8. The witnesses described extensive renovations to this banquet facility that had taken place, including land development plans and previous zoning approvals that had brought the Applicant to this particular plan.

9. Mr. Ford described the fact that the parking for the facility is located a considerable distance from the entrance, with even the closest handicapped parking spaces some 200 feet from the entrance.

10. He described his plans to improve access to the facility by providing a canopy over the driveway that would allow cars to pull up, discharge their passengers and continue on to the parking lots.

11. He described the need to improve the facility and the number of improvements that he had made in recent years as upgrades.

12. He stated that it was difficult to compete with the nicer banquet facilities available in Bucks County unless there had been serious improvements in the look of

the grounds, the interior of the premises, the bathrooms, the air conditioning and the other amenities that banquet organizers sought for their clients.

13. The Applicant presented Exhibit A-5 which is a picture of the present, improved entrance to the facility.

14. The Applicant introduced as Exhibit A-6 four photographs showing competing banquet facilities in Bucks County all of which had canopies that would permit guests to exit their vehicles no matter the weather.

15. The Applicant introduced A-7, two photos showing a rendering of the proposed new entrance, with a canopy, flower boxes, a change in the stairs and an all together more attractive entrance.

16. The Applicant indicated that the base of the columns holding the canopy would be located 58 feet from the right-of-way, or a variance of 17 feet, and the roof would extend to 56 feet from the edge of the right-of-way, a variance of 19 feet.

17. The Board questioned Mr. Ford concerning the revamped entrance, the plantings and the stairs and he provided satisfactory answers in all respects.

18. He agreed that he would accept as a condition that some form of the drawing would be incorporated into plantings that would enhance the entrance to the facility.

19. He introduced a letter as Exhibit A-8 from the Doylestown Township Zoning Officer, Sinclair Salisbury, pointing out that the proposed canopy would need a variance from the front yard setback.

20. Doylestown Township indicated that they supported the application.

21. The Board noted the significant improvements that Pennsford had made to the property and indicated, as the Applicant had testified, that it was an improvement for the district.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

1. The Subject Property is nonconforming in the C-2 District as a banquet facility.

2. The Board has previously considered issues relating to this facility and the Applicant has proceeded in a satisfactory manner.

3. A canopy is a reasonable amenity for this type of facility, almost a necessity as the industry has developed, and the location of the existing building would prevent the erection of a canopy.

4. No one appeared to oppose the application.

5. Accordingly, it was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that the prayer of the application is granted, the Applicant is granted a variance to permit the erection of a canopy whose pillars will sit 58 feet from the right-of-way of Almshouse Road and whose roof will sit 56 feet from the right-of-way, subject to all previously enforceable conditions not inconsistent with this Decision, and subject to the condition that the Applicant will provide some form of planting or flower boxes at the entrance to the facility to enhance the visual experience.

WHEREFORE, the Doylestown Township Zoning Hearing Board hereby GRANTS a variance to §175-72.B(5) to permit the erection of a canopy at the entrance to the facility, subject to compliance with all other applicable governmental ordinances and regulations.

**ZONING HEARING BOARD OF  
DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP**

**By:** /s/ W. Andrew McPherson  
W. Andrew McPherson, Chairman

/s/ William J. Lahr  
William J. Lahr, Vice Chairman

/s/ Richard K. Gaver  
Richard K. Gaver, Secretary

***IMPORTANT NOTE:*** Pursuant to §175-136 and §175-137 of the Doylestown Township Zoning Ordinance, the relief granted herein shall expire five (5) years from the date of this decision.