



**KLEHR HARRISON  
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June 9, 2026

**VIA EMAIL ONLY**

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Philadelphia Historical Commission  
[Jon.Farnham@phila.gov](mailto:Jon.Farnham@phila.gov)

**Property: 4889 Umbria Street**  
**PHC Hearing: June 12, 2026**

Dear Dr. Farnham:

This firm represents Genesis Properties and GMH Communities (“GMH”), equitable owners of the real property located at 4889 Umbria Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (the “Property”). I write in connection with the pending nomination (the “Nomination”) submitted by Ridge Park Civic Association (“RPCA” or the “Nominator”), seeking to designate a portion of the Property on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination is scheduled for consideration at the Historical Commission’s June 12, 2026 meeting.

As explained at the May 20, 2026 meeting of the Committee on Historic Designation (“CHD”), GMH does not oppose historic designation of the main manufacturing building and powerplant only (the “Nominated Buildings”); however, GMH objects to the incorporation of any historic boundary or buffer at the rear of the Nominated Buildings, as proposed within the Nomination. As acknowledged within the staff recommendation and in my public comments at the CHD meeting, it has long been GMH’s intention to incorporate and preserve the Nominated Buildings into its approved redevelopment plan proposing 363 residential dwelling units and 380 parking spaces across from the Ivy Ridge Regional Rail station.

GMH received a conditional zoning permit for its redevelopment on August 8, 2025, after which it participated in comprehensive discussions with RPCA, leading up to its submission and completion of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission’s Civic Design Review (“CDR”) process in November 2025. GMH’s corresponding zoning permit was recently issued on May 28, 2026 at ZP-2026-006236. Copies of GMH’s approved conditional zoning permit and plan from August 2025 and primary zoning permit and plan approved in May 2026, are attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibits “A” and “B,” respectively.

GMH's approved zoning plans clearly establish its intention to preserve and incorporate the Nominated Buildings into its redevelopment. Notwithstanding, the incorporation of any proposed buffer at the rear of the Nominated Buildings would be problematic and prejudicial to GMH. The boundaries proposed by the Nomination include, *inter alia*, approved loading spaces and the location of a new pad-mounted transformer and relocated electrical transformer. Based on GMH's approved zoning plans and designed building permit plans, historic designation of any portion of the land beyond the building's exterior boundaries would create a significant impediment to the project. After spending considerable time designing plans that were negotiated with RPCA and favorably reviewed by the CDR Committee, GMH simply cannot afford to delay its redevelopment to seek historic approvals for improvements, grading, loading and/or parking modifications to the area directly behind the Nominated Buildings. As noted by Commissioner Cooperman at the CHD meeting, building directly against and around the Nominated Buildings would not be inappropriate from a historical perspective, insofar as industrial buildings and industrial complexes change over time making the immediately surrounding setting less important. Further, the proposed rear buffer would serve no purpose whatsoever. The buffer area cannot be viewed from the public right-of-way along either the primary Umbria Street frontage or the western frontage along Parker Avenue.

Most importantly, at the May 20, 2026 CHD meeting, the Nominator indicated that it does not oppose amending the boundary to exclude any open space beyond the exterior perimeter of the Nominated Buildings. In recommending that the Nominated Buildings satisfy the requisite criteria for designation, the CHD further recommended and concluded that the designation boundary may be amended to include the Nominated Buildings only, with no open land, as per GMH's request above. On behalf of the equitable owner, I therefore respectfully request that the Historical Commission expressly limit the boundary of any historic designation to only the exterior perimeter of the existing Nominated Buildings.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or require additional information.

Respectfully yours,



Michael V. Phillips

Enclosures

Exhibit A  
August 2025 approved conditional zoning

# Zoning Permit

Permit Number ZP-2025-003040C

LOCATION OF WORK 4889 UMBRIA ST, Philadelphia, PA 19127-1916	PERMIT FEE \$1,492.00	DATE ISSUED 8/8/2025
	ZBA CALENDAR	ZBA DECISION DATE
	ZONING DISTRICTS IRMX	

PERMIT HOLDER KERD ASSOCIATES	1420 WALNUT ST SUITE 607 PHILADELPHIA PA 19102
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OWNER CONTACT 1 Kerd Associates c/o Edward M. Paul	4889 Umbria St., Philadelphia, PA 19127
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OWNER CONTACT 2	
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TYPE OF WORK Conditional Zoning Approval
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APPROVED DEVELOPMENT Conditional approval for the following:  For the relocation of lot lines to create one lot (Premises C) from two lots (two deeded parcels know as 4889 Umbria St).  For the erection of a semi-detached structure that includes structured parking for 380 vehicles (including 8 accessible spaces
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APPROVED USE(S) Residential - Household Living - Multi-Family
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THIS PERMIT IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING PROVISIO(S) AS ESTABLISHED BY THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT (ZBA)
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<p><b>i</b> <b>CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permits, including Zoning Permits <b>not</b> involving development, shall expire if the authorized work or Use is not commenced within, or if work is suspended or abandoned for period of, <b>six (6) months from the date of issuance</b> with the following exceptions:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>30-days or 10-days</b> for Permits related to Unsafe or Imminently Dangerous properties respectively.</li> <li><b>3-years</b> from issuance or date of decision by ZBA for Zoning Permits involving development.</li> <li><b>60-days</b> for Plumbing, Electrical or Fire Suppression Rough-In Approvals.</li> <li>Any Permit issued for construction or demolition is valid for no more than <b>five (5) years</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>All provisions of the Philadelphia Code must be complied with, whether specified herein or not. This permit does NOT constitute approval of any Violation of such Code.</li> <li>The issuance of this CO/permit does not affirm that the subject property is federally compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Owner remains responsible for ensuring property complies with all local, state and federal requirements.</li> </ul>
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# Zoning Permit

Permit Number ZP-2025-003040C

and 20 EV charging spaces), and 128 bicycle spaces (along an accessible route). Size and location per plans.



#### APPROVED USE(S)

Residential - Household Living - Multi-Family

THIS PERMIT IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING PROVISIO(S) AS ESTABLISHED BY THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT (ZBA)



#### CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS:

- Permits, including Zoning Permits **not** involving development, shall expire if the authorized work or Use is not commenced within, or if work is suspended or abandoned for period of, **six (6) months from the date of issuance** with the following exceptions:
  - **30-days or 10-days** for Permits related to Unsafe or Imminently Dangerous properties respectively.
  - **3-years** from issuance or date of decision by ZBA for Zoning Permits involving development.
  - **60-days** for Plumbing, Electrical or Fire Suppression Rough-In Approvals.
  - Any Permit issued for construction or demolition is valid for no more than **five (5) years**.
- All provisions of the Philadelphia Code must be complied with, whether specified herein or not. This permit does NOT constitute approval of any Violation of such Code.
- The issuance of this CO/permit does not affirm that the subject property is federally compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Owner remains responsible for ensuring property complies with all local, state and federal requirements.

# Zoning Permit

Permit Number ZP-2025-003040C

## ADDITIONAL LOCATION(S)

See front side for primary parcel associated with this permit

## PARCEL

4889 UMBRIA ST, Philadelphia, PA 19127-1916

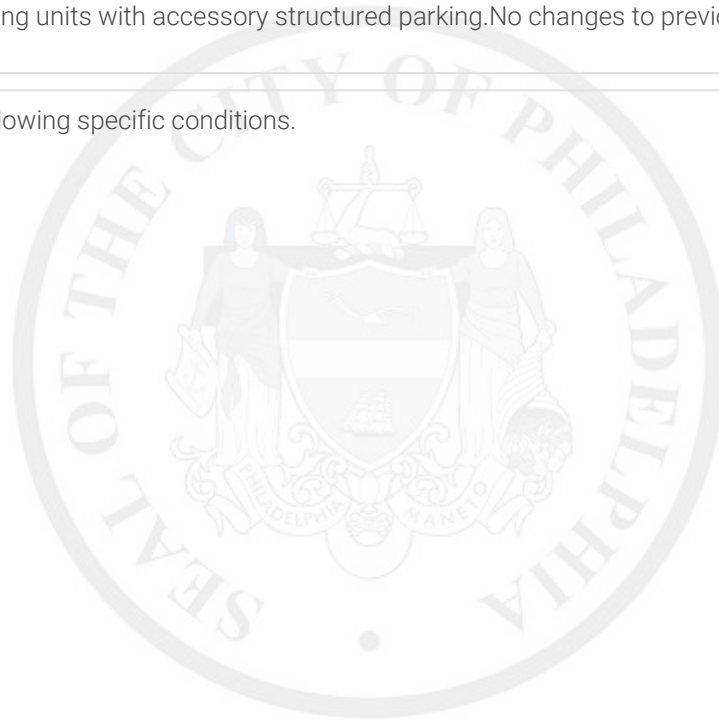
## ADDITIONAL USE DETAILS

See front side for specific use(s) associated with this permit

Household Living for 384 dwelling units with accessory structured parking.No changes to previously approved uses in the existing structures.

This permit is subject to the following specific conditions.

## CONDITIONS



**Tax Exemption(Abatement):** Information and applications for Real Estate Tax Abatement for new construction and improvements available from the Office of Property Assessment [www.phila.gov/opa](http://www.phila.gov/opa), 215-686-4334, 601 Walnut St., 300W, Phila, PA 19106. Applications for new construction and commercial improvements due within 60 days of permit issuance. Residential rehab and builder/developer applications due by Dec 31 of year of permit issuance.







Exhibit B  
May 2026 approved zoning





# Zoning Permit

Permit Number ZP-2026-006236

LOCATION OF WORK 4889 UMBRIA ST, Philadelphia, PA 19127-1916 ENTIRE	PERMIT FEE \$821.00	DATE ISSUED 5/28/2026
	ZBA CALENDAR	ZBA DECISION DATE
	ZONING DISTRICTS IRMX	

PERMIT HOLDER KERD ASSOCIATES	1420 WALNUT ST SUITE 607 PHILADELPHIA PA 19102
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OWNER CONTACT 1
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OWNER CONTACT 2
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TYPE OF WORK New construction, addition, GFA change
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APPROVED DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PARTIAL DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES AS SHOWN ON PLAN; FOR THE ERECTION OF A SEMI-DETACHED EIGHT (8) STORY STRUCTURE.  FOR USE AS MULTI-FAMILY (THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-THREE (363) DWELLING UNITS) HOUSEHOLD LIVING; FOR THE CONTINUED USE OF EXISTING STRUCTURES ON THE SAME LOT AS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED; WITH THREE HUNDRED
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APPROVED USE(S) Residential - Household Living - Multi-Family
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THIS PERMIT IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING PROVISIO(S) AS ESTABLISHED BY THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT (ZBA)
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<p><b>i</b> <b>CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permits, including Zoning Permits <b>not</b> involving development, shall expire if the authorized work or Use is not commenced within, or if work is suspended or abandoned for period of, <b>six (6) months from the date of issuance</b> with the following exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>30-days or 10-days</b> for Permits related to Unsafe or Imminently Dangerous properties respectively.</li> <li><b>3-years</b> from issuance or date of decision by ZBA for Zoning Permits involving development.</li> <li><b>60-days</b> for Plumbing, Electrical or Fire Suppression Rough-In Approvals.</li> <li>Any Permit issued for construction or demolition is valid for no more than <b>five (5) years</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>All provisions of the Philadelphia Code must be complied with, whether specified herein or not. This permit does NOT constitute approval of any Violation of such Code.</li> <li>The issuance of this CO/permit does not affirm that the subject property is federally compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Owner remains responsible for ensuring property complies with all local, state and federal requirements.</li> </ul>
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# Zoning Permit

Permit Number ZP-2026-006236

EIGHTY (380) ACCESSORY OFF-STREET PARKING SPACES, INCLUDING EIGHT (8) ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACES AND TWENTY (20) ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING SPACES; TWO (2) ACCESSORY LOADING SPACES; AND ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-ONE (121) ACCESSORY CLASS 1A BICYCLE PARKING SPACES LOCATED ALONG AN ACCESSIBLE ROUTE. SIZE AND LOCATION AS SHOWN ON PLAN.



#### APPROVED USE(S)

Residential - Household Living - Multi-Family

THIS PERMIT IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING PROVISIO(S) AS ESTABLISHED BY THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT (ZBA)



#### CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS:

- Permits, including Zoning Permits **not** involving development, shall expire if the authorized work or Use is not commenced within, or if work is suspended or abandoned for period of, **six (6) months from the date of issuance** with the following exceptions:
  - **30-days or 10-days** for Permits related to Unsafe or Imminently Dangerous properties respectively.
  - **3-years** from issuance or date of decision by ZBA for Zoning Permits involving development.
  - **60-days** for Plumbing, Electrical or Fire Suppression Rough-In Approvals.
  - Any Permit issued for construction or demolition is valid for no more than **five (5) years**.
- All provisions of the Philadelphia Code must be complied with, whether specified herein or not. This permit does NOT constitute approval of any Violation of such Code.
- The issuance of this CO/permit does not affirm that the subject property is federally compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Owner remains responsible for ensuring property complies with all local, state and federal requirements.

# Zoning Permit

Permit Number ZP-2026-006236

## ADDITIONAL LOCATION(S)

See front side for primary parcel associated with this permit

## PARCEL

4889 UMBRIA ST, Philadelphia, PA 19127-1916

## ADDITIONAL USE DETAILS

See front side for specific use(s) associated with this permit

This permit is subject to the following specific conditions.

### CONDITIONS

This Zoning Permit (ZP) shall expire if construction or operation pursuant to the permit or approval has not begun within three years after the date the permit or approval was granted.

Changes of use shall be valid for a period of six months unless an application for a Certificate of Occupancy is submitted for that use within such period.

See § 14-303 of the Philadelphia Zoning Code for more information.



**Tax Exemption(Abatement):** Information and applications for Real Estate Tax Abatement available from Office of Property Assessment [www.phila.gov/opa](http://www.phila.gov/opa), 215-686-4334, 601 Walnut St., 300W, Phila, PA 19106. Applications for new construction and commercial improvements due within 60 days of building permit issuance. Residential rehab and builder/developer applications due by Dec 31 of year of building permit issuance.