

The Annex at Pleasant Playground Project

A partnership of a private foundation and a community development corporation, both located in the Mt. Airy section of Philadelphia, is requesting funding from the State of Pennsylvania to pay for environmental testing and remediation on an abandoned 1/3 acre site located at [6717 Chew Avenue](#) (the Property) in East Mt. Airy. Once the environmental cleanup has been completed, the partnership of the Drumcliff Foundation and Mt. Airy USA plan to adapt the Property for community use.

Restoration of the Property would remove an eyesore which has had a detrimental effect on the surrounding neighborhood. Used tires and debris have been dumped on the site and the lot is overgrown with weeds (See photos). Local government officials are keen to have this blighted site restored and used for recreational and environmental programming.

The conversion of the former Kingdom Car Care property into a community center is a great opportunity for East Mt. Airy, and will bring educational, recreational and environmental programs to an underserved part of the city.

For complete site photos, plan drawings, and contact info, please visit drumcliff.org/annex/

The Opportunities

Adjoining the Pleasant Playground Recreation Center, and very close to Emlen Elementary School, this former garage property will serve a diverse set of neighborhood-based public and private organizations that offer programs for both children and adults. The following are a few of the anticipated outcomes:

- The Pleasant Playground Recreation Center can expand on its core recreational and educational programs;
- Emlen Elementary and Wissahickon Charter intend to use the space for after school educational and sports programs, as well as a safe and secure area for general play;
- Germantown Soccer Club can establish its headquarters there, as well as expand its soccer programs and attract more children to the sport;
- Local adults can stage yoga and exercise classes, among other activities.

Our Experience

The Drumcliff Foundation has already funded a variety of successful educational, sports and environmental programs at the Emlen School (please see attached letter from school principal Ms. Tammy Thomas). Many Emlen students participate in these same programs during the summer when they are relocated to Pleasant Playground. The Germantown Soccer Club (see attached brochure) was founded in 2010, and has provided soccer training to hundreds of children in Germantown and Mt. Airy.

Mt. Airy USA, founded in 1980, has initiated numerous programs to improve the housing stock of the Mt. Airy neighborhood and to enhance its central business corridors. Among its numerous projects Mt. Airy USA has been the lead developer in the recent construction of the Wissahickon Charter School and the current revitalization of Lovett Library Park. With the creation of its Mt. Airy Schools Coalition, Mt. Airy USA has had a significant impact on local public schools as well.

Progress to date

The firm of Metcalfe Architecture and Design has prepared a preliminary design for the site. This preliminary plan is attached.

The partnership of Mt Airy USA and the Drumcliff Foundation signed a contract this past summer to purchase the Property contingent on satisfactory environmental review.

Next Steps

Initial [Phase I](#) and [Phase II](#) studies have already been completed—paid for by the Drumcliff Foundation. These initial tests uncovered evidence of contaminated soil and groundwater on the property likely caused by leaks from abandoned oil tanks buried on the property. Environmental consultants have called for additional testing to determine more accurately the extent of contamination, and whether it has extended off site. Further testing is expected to cost \$30,000, and \$100,000 is the rough estimate for the environmental remediation, if it is determined that the contamination has been contained on site.

The partnership is seeking State funds to pay for the additional testing and ensuing remediation. The partnership of the Drumcliff Foundation and Mt. Airy USA would then be responsible for raising all necessary funds to purchase the Property, renovate the existing structure, and restore the paved property into a natural grass site. If government assistance cannot be obtained for environmental testing and remediation, the property in all likelihood will not be saleable and the blight would continue indefinitely.

This project was initiated by the two heirs of the Property. With the death of their father and as executors of his estate, they approached local government officials to have the site converted for recreational and community purposes. After being approached by local government officials, the Drumcliff Foundation enlisted Mt. Airy USA to make this vision into a reality. The proposed project has received strong support from city, state and federal elected representatives.

Existing Site Photos

(additional photos can be found at drumcliff.org/annex/)



Preliminary Project Layout/Design

(additional designs can be found at drumcliff.org/annex/)

