

Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 01/24/2024)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: CMU Chabad, 5118 Beeler Street	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): PWWG Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition Rabbi Silverman
Parcel Number(s): 52-R-190	
BDA Application Number: BDA-2025-03467	
Meeting Location: Zoom	
Date: 8/4/2025	
Meeting Start Time: 5:00pm	
Applicant: Joseph Roy, PWWG Architects	Approx. Number of Attendees: 12
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): Zoning Board of Adjustments	

How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

Rabbi Silverman currently runs Chabad of Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) out of their home at 5120 Beeler Street and they have been serving the Jewish community at CMU for 17 years. This project will provide a more permanent space for them to continue their work with CMU's Jewish community. The applicant bought the home at 5118 Beeler Street 2 years ago, which was formerly a fraternity house.

The applicant has communicated with neighbors, CMU, and Squirrel Hill Urban coalition regarding the project. The house at 5118 is proposed to be demolished. They plan to follow all city requirements related to demolitions. They expect demolition to take about four weeks, and the entire project from demolition to completion of the new structure to take approximately 18 months to 2 years.

This project will go to the Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA) as it is in a R1D-L zoning district, which permits only single-family homes. This project would be classified as "Religious Assembly (Limited)" which requires a special exception.

This project will utilize CMU's parking center on Forbes Avenue to alleviate some of the parking needs on Beeler as a result of the project. They're anticipating needing 10 total parking spaces, one single shared ADA parking and/or loading space that is on-site, and the remaining 9 in the off-site garage. The site is less than 400 feet from the parking garage that would be utilized.

They'll be seeking variances for the rear setback, and front yard parking/loading. They will be seeking the special exception for the use of religious assembly, and for the off-site parking. The applicant presented details on the setback requirements and what they're proposing. There will be a small trash enclosure in the rear of the structure that would utilize a private waste disposal company.

The first floorplan includes a study/flex space, an office, a men and women's restroom. The basement will include a large dining area and commercial kitchen. The second floor will house a synagogue, a conference room, and a single-user restroom. The 3rd floor will have a game-room/lounge, and two restrooms. The building will have an elevator.

The front façade will be composed of red brick and white fiber cement lap siding, and have a front porch, second floor balcony, and a sloped roof. The sides and back will be mostly fiber cement lap siding with windows.

Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
Will there be a fence around the property during construction and where will that be?	Yes, there will be a temporary chain-link fence around the property, likely all the way to the street, during construction. This will be locked at night.
Will the fence block the sidewalk?	Most likely the sidewalk will be out of commission during construction.
Are the 10 parking spaces including the parking in the CMU garage?	Yes, we will only have one parking spot on site, and we're working with CMU to include the additional 9 in their parking structure.
I believe the 4 floors (3 above ground, 1 below) does not fit well in the surrounding context. Local synagogues would happily accept students, as opposed to incorporating a synagogue into this project. It almost seems like this is taking more space than needed, there could be one less floor without sacrificing any of the use.	As you can see in the illustration, there are only 3 floors above-grade.
It still appears to be creeping above the roofline of the surrounding homes.	The Silverman's home next door is also 3-floors, so we're trying to balance accommodating the programming in the building with compressing the size to fit the surrounding buildings.
	Rabbi Silverman: Students are welcome to attend local synagogues in addition to Chabad. We're already doing all of this work in our home next door, so this is just giving us more space to continue this work.
Have you spoken to the neighbors? What do they think?	Yes, I reached out to the neighbors, some of which didn't respond. However, the ones I did speak with her happy that we would be getting rid of one of the party houses on the street.
Do you have a construction timeline?	Much of this is dependent on getting approvals from ZBA. It will likely take another year to get financing together and have everything approved by PLI, etc.
Is the parking space an existing curb-cut?	Yes, there was an existing curb-cut for a driveway, but it was not previously approved by DOMI. We will be widening the curb-cut and get necessary approvals.
Where will exhaust be for the commercial kitchen?	

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>I think it would be helpful to see where exhaust from the kitchen will be for nearby neighbors. Particularly for neighbors in the back, considering odor and noise.</p>	<p>We aren't sure yet, but I imagine it would go through the building and out the roof.</p> <p>We will also be following residential compatibility standards for odor and noise that we will be following.</p>
<p>Have the funds been fully raised and what is the expected cost?</p>	<p>The funds have not been fully raised, but it will be a combination of fundraising and a loan for the project. The expected cost is between 5 and 7 million.</p>

Planner completing report: Austin Herzog