

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM**

Property Name: Wild Acres / Grosvenor Estate Inventory Number: M:30-15

Address: 5400-5430 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, Montgomery County, Maryland 20814

Owner: Renewable Natural Resources Foundation

Tax Parcel Number: P65 and P71 Tax Map Number: HP122

I-495/I-95 Capital Beltway Corridor Transportation
Project: Improvement Study Agency: State Highway Administration

Site visit by: _____ Staff: No Yes Name: _____ Date: _____

Eligibility recommended: X Eligibility not recommended: _____

Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G None

Is property located within a historic district? No Yes Name of District: _____

Is district listed? No Yes

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: I-495/I-95 Capital Beltway Corridor Transportation Improvement Study
Historic Resources Survey and Determination of Eligibility Report

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo):*

Wild Acres, also known as the Grosvenor Estate, is a large Tudor Revival manor house constructed in 1928 for Gilbert Grosvenor, founder of the National Geographic Society. The property was previously surveyed by Michael Dwyer of the M-NCPPC in 1976 and by Marsha Mai and Roy Gauzza of Sugarloaf Regional Trails in 1978. Not mentioned in the prior survey forms are several structures located on the Wild Acres Property, including a 2-story cottage located at 5420 Grosvenor Lane, an agricultural outbuilding and a silo. Since the prior surveys two brick and steel-frame modern commercial structures have been constructed on the property. The property is accessed by a paved driveway extending south from Grosvenor Lane. The driveway passes the cottage at 5240 Grosvenor Lane, then splits to extend west toward the main house and south to the parking areas for the modern office buildings on the property. The main house has not changed since the previous survey. The cottage at 5420 Grosvenor Lane is a 2-story wood-frame structure with a brick foundation, wood shingle siding, and a cross-gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. It has a cut-away porch at the southwest corner of the front elevation, a central brick chimney, wood 6/6 double-hung windows, wood shutters, exposed rafter ends and an enclosed rear porch. To the north of this cottage are a 1-story wood-frame agricultural outbuilding and a concrete silo structure located within a fenced area.

Prepared by: Tim Tamburrino, KCI Technologies, Inc., January 2000

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| MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW | |
| Eligibility recommended: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Eligibility not recommended: _____ |
| Criteria: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D | Considerations: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| Comments: _____ | |
| <u>[Signature]</u> | <u>9/14/00</u> |
| Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services | Date |
| <u>[Signature]</u> | <u>10/12/00</u> |
| Reviewer, NR Programs | Date |

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Inventory Number: M-30-15

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photos):* (CONT'D)

The two modern office buildings on the property were constructed circa 1980 and are 2-story steel-frame structures with a brick and glass exterior. Though unmistakably modern, the use of brick, glass, ornamental timber-framing with corner braces, and dormers lessens their impact on the property. The parking lots associated with these structures are not visible from the main house.

Wild Acres, the Grosvenor Estate, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C as an excellent example of a Tudor Revival-style manor house constructed by a significant person during the suburban estate-building era of the early twentieth century. The property is eligible under Criterion A as a representative example of twentieth century suburban estate construction. The property retains such features as the main house, garage, historic approach to the house, and sweeping rear lawn. The property is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion B for its association with Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, founder of the National Geographic Society. Gilbert Grosvenor, and his wife Elsie purchased the land in 1912 and spent summers on the property in an old farmhouse until the current house was constructed in 1928. The Grosvenors held large social functions at Wild Acres, including a birthday party for Mrs. William Howard Taft. The property remained in the ownership of Gilbert Grosvenor until his death in 1966. Since 1975 the property has been home to a consortium of earth science organizations. Finally, the property is eligible under Criterion C as an excellent example of Tudor Revival architecture. The main house retains such character-defining features as a steeply pitched roof pieced by gables and dormers, bands of multiple-light casement windows, prominent chimneys, and false half-timbering. The stone exterior, wood shingle roof, and scale of the building distinguish this structure from other Tudor Revival-style residences constructed during the early twentieth century. Investigations have not been conducted to determine whether the property has the potential to yield information important in history or pre-history, therefore, National Register Criterion D can not be assessed at this time.

The National Register Boundary for Wild Acres, the Grosvenor Estate, includes all land remaining from its association with Gilbert Grosvenor and the property's period of significance of 1928-1966. The boundaries consist of tax parcels P65 and P71 on Montgomery County tax map HP122. The boundary includes 14 hectares (34.7 acres), the main house, garage, outbuilding, silo, and carriage at 5420 Grosvenor Lane as contributing structures. Non-contributing structures within the National Register boundary include the two modern office buildings and all associated parking areas.