

DATE: 5/29/08

ITEM NO. 4

EXHIBIT NO. 3

TESTIMONY
OF THE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING
ON THE
PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE
MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION:

WILD ACRES, 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda,
Historic Resource #30/15

May 29, 2008

Good morning. For the record, I am Caroline Alderson, a member of the Historic Preservation Commission. I am pleased to appear today to present the HPC's recommendations on the designation of Wild Acres to the Montgomery County *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

The HPC held a public hearing and worksession on this Amendment on April 23, 2008. The eight members in attendance carefully considered the nomination and voted unanimously to recommend in favor of adding Wild Acres to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The Preliminary Draft Amendment before you reflects the HPC finding, that this resource meets six of the nine criteria of the Preservation Ordinance. It bears mentioning that a resource need meet only one of the designation criteria to make it eligible for inclusion in the *Master Plan*.

In my experience on the Historic Preservation Commission, this resource is among the finest we have seen. The resource is outstanding both for its historical significance and its architectural value. The estate was the home of Gilbert Grosvenor, Editor of the National Geographic Magazine. Grosvenor engaged architect Arthur Heaton to design all three buildings recommended for designation: the main house, the carriage house, and the caretaker's cottage. The buildings form a cohesive whole in their history and design by the same architect. The rural

design of the Tudor Revival house and garage, and the rustic Craftsman design of the caretaker's cottage were clearly part of the Grosvenor's vision for a country retreat embodied in the name Wild Acres.

As all three buildings have a very high level of integrity, the recommended environmental setting was established to include all three resources and protect important viewsheds associated with the resources. The house really has two fronts and it is critical that the environmental setting include the viewshed to and from both sides of the house. One looks to the yard facing Grosvenor Lane and includes the access to both the carriage house and caretaker's cottage , and the other looks over the sweeping lawn and wooded areas that are equally important to the historic character of the resource.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

Testimony on Behalf of the Society of American Foresters
submitted by
Michael T. Goergen, Jr. Executive Vice President and CEO
before the
Montgomery County Planning Board
May 28, 2008

Mr. Chairman and members of the Board, thank you for the opportunity to present our property and its historic resources before you today. My name is Michael T. Goergen, Jr. and I am the Executive Vice President and CEO of the Society of American Foresters. I am also a resident of Montgomery County and live approximately one mile from SAF's property in the Wildwood neighborhood.

We would like to pursue a course of action that is mutually agreeable to all interested parties, and remain hopeful we can reach agreement. But I find it difficult to once again be before this Board opposing a nomination of our property.

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a position today where we can no longer afford to maintain the building and our property. The property is choked with invasive weeds, the buildings are deteriorating, and the birds that the Grosvenor's once loved are largely gone due to suburban encroachment and the interstate highway system. As a non-profit organization, our resources are limited and we prefer to spend them on programs that improve the care of the world's forest resources. It is with this recognition that we have decided to sell our headquarters and grounds to Nations Academy.

When we appeared before the Historic Preservation Board we did not oppose the nomination of the Gifford Pinchot Forestry Building as part of the County's program. However, both the citizen petition and the Board's recommendation go far beyond what we as the property owner can support. The recommendation of the environmental setting and other buildings is not acceptable to us.

If this action is approved, in combination with the Legacy Open Space designation, enacted over our objections, and with disregard to the professional society for foresters' opinion of the quality of our forest, the County has significantly reduced the value of our members' asset.

We are essentially being punished for maintaining this property for more than 35 years. Now that we find that we can no longer afford to maintain it, the County is taking actions that are harming our ability to sell the property to a new owner who has pledged to restore the mansion to its former glory and respect the environment on this property.

We object to actions affecting our property that are taken without our consent. We object to the trespass of the nominator and her lack of outreach to us about this nomination. We object to the consideration of our property for historical designation when this matter was already decided on November 20, 1980. We object to the citizens' use of this process to stop development as is demonstrated by the e-mail sent by wildwoodnews@aol.com which states, "the property has been nominated by a member of our community (Julia Weller, Rossmore Court) for inclusion on the

Historic Register which could drastically limit development plans on the site.” (I am submitting a copy of the e-mail for the record.)

We object to the nomination in principle, but in the spirit of compromise we are willing to offer a more modest proposal.

We are grudgingly proposing to include the Gifford Pinchot Forestry Building and garage and a limited environmental setting outlined in brown on the approved site plans before you. The environmental setting we propose is consistent with the approved site plan for the property. The Western boundary is formed by the approved road. The Southern boundary is formed by the first significant slope away from the property, an area consistent with the fence in photo three in your packets. The Eastern boundary is formed with the property line and the edge of the garage. The Northern boundary is a line of trees originally on the site shown in photo two and in line with the flag pole currently on the property.

As you can see from the historical photos, our property is not what it was when Gilbert Grosvenor lived there with his family. The fields and orchards are now modern office buildings. Grosvenor demolished the 100 year old farm house on the site where Grosvenor built his home (shown in photo three). The pasture lands are overgrown and choked with invasive weeds brought to us from ornamental plantings in neighbors' yards. The man-made pond was destroyed when vandals broke the concrete damn. Vegetation grows, trees die, and today two highways cut through a parcel that was once more than 100 acres.

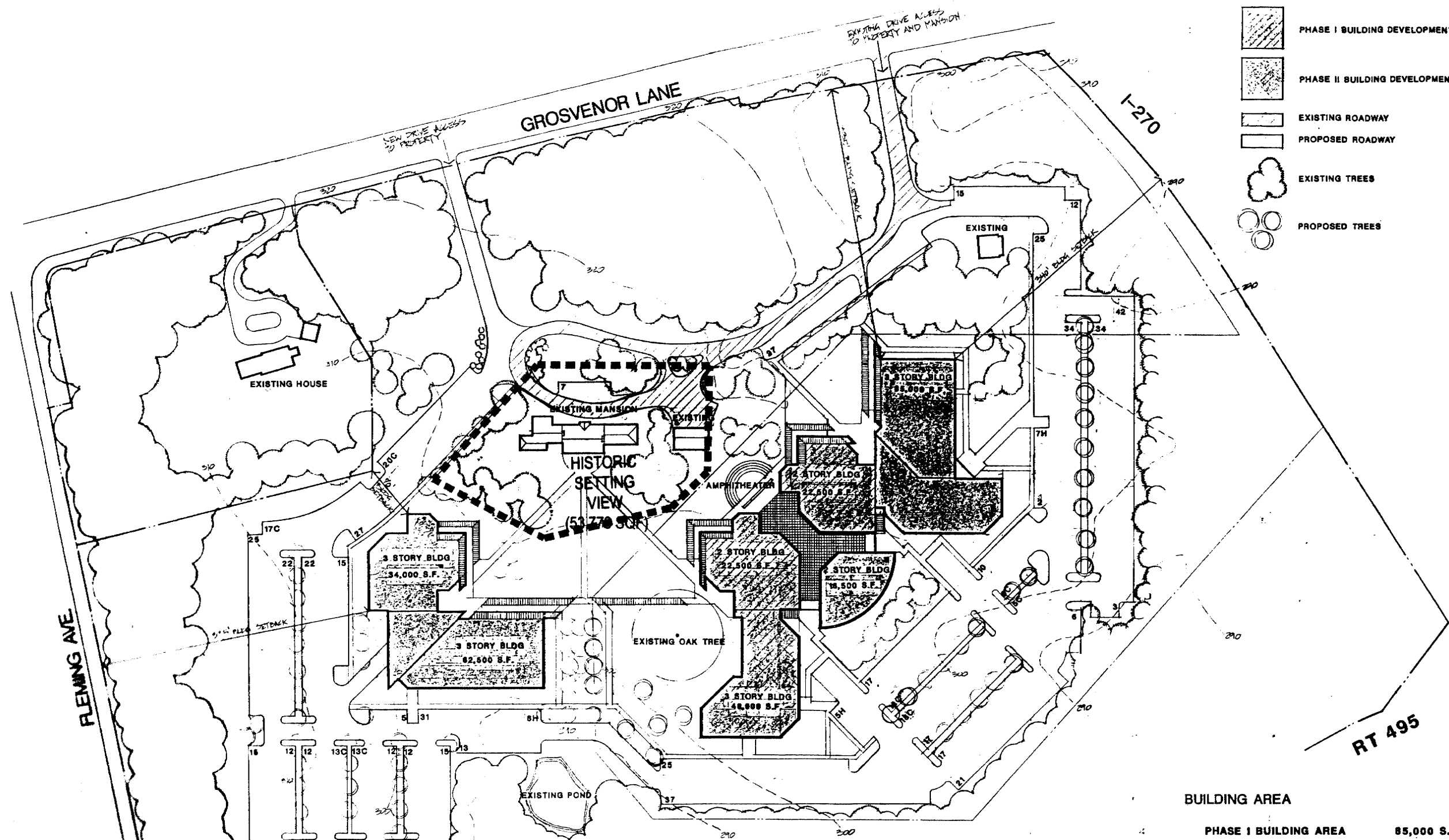
The Grosvenor family proposed a very different vision of the property in the 1970's that included high-rises, condos and townhouses. It was the Society of American Foresters who has maintained this property for 35 years, and we did not have to keep the mansion.

In perhaps one of the most ironic twists in this process my research led me to an article in National Geographic Magazine published shortly after the death of Gilbert Grosvenor. In it the author describes various places that bare Mr. Grosvenor's name. Of all of them, it says, as a former educator, he was most proud of Grosvenor Elementary in Bethesda. His name no longer graces that school.

I would now like to introduce an expert on historic preservation Mr. William Lebovich who will discuss the merits of the property.

COMMUNITY EXHIBIT
RECEIVED BY MCPB

DATE: 5/19/83
ITEM NO. 27
EXHIBIT NO. 7



PHASE I BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

 PHASE II BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

 EXISTING ROADWAY

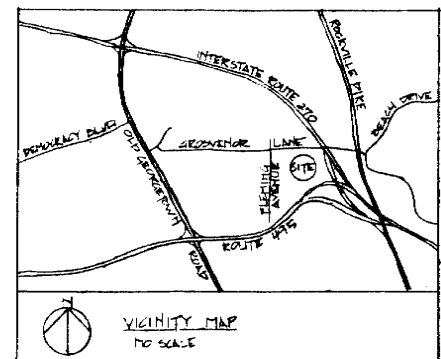
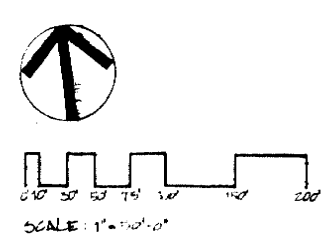
 PROPOSED ROADWAY

 EXISTING TREES

 PROPOSED TREES

SITE PLAN

PHASE I & II



BUILDING AREA	
PHASE I BUILDING AREA	85,000 S.F.
PHASE II BUILDING AREA	198,000 S.F.
EXISTING MANSION & BLDGS	7,500 S.F.
	290,500 S.F.

PARKING AREA	
STANDARD	598
COMPACT	110 (15%)
HANDICAPPED	18
	726 PARKING

NOTE: THE ORIGINAL CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN WAS PREPARED BY DNC ASSOCIATES, ROCKVILLE, MD. DATE: JULY 16, 1980 & REVISED ON DEC. 8, 1980. THIS INFORMATION WAS GIVEN BY RNR.

Caro Monroe Liang ARCHITECTS PC

120 Indiana Avenue, Suite 406
 P.O. Box 4432
 Rockville, MD 20850
 (301) 772-2221

444 Independence Drive, Suite 444
 Rockville, MD 20850
 (301) 772-4144

Comm. _____
 Date: 4/11/83
 Drawn: Z.K.
 Prod. Mgr. _____

RNR PHASE I & II
RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.



COMMUNITY EXHIBIT
RECEIVED BY MCPB
DATE: 5/29/08
ITEM NO. 4
FYHTRIT NO. 6

Supplemental Material Supporting SAF's Recommendations on Historic Preservation

Photo 1



Photo 1 shows the current view of the front of the Gifford Pinchot Forestry Building (GPFB). To the left is the modern office building on the RNRF property.

Photo 2

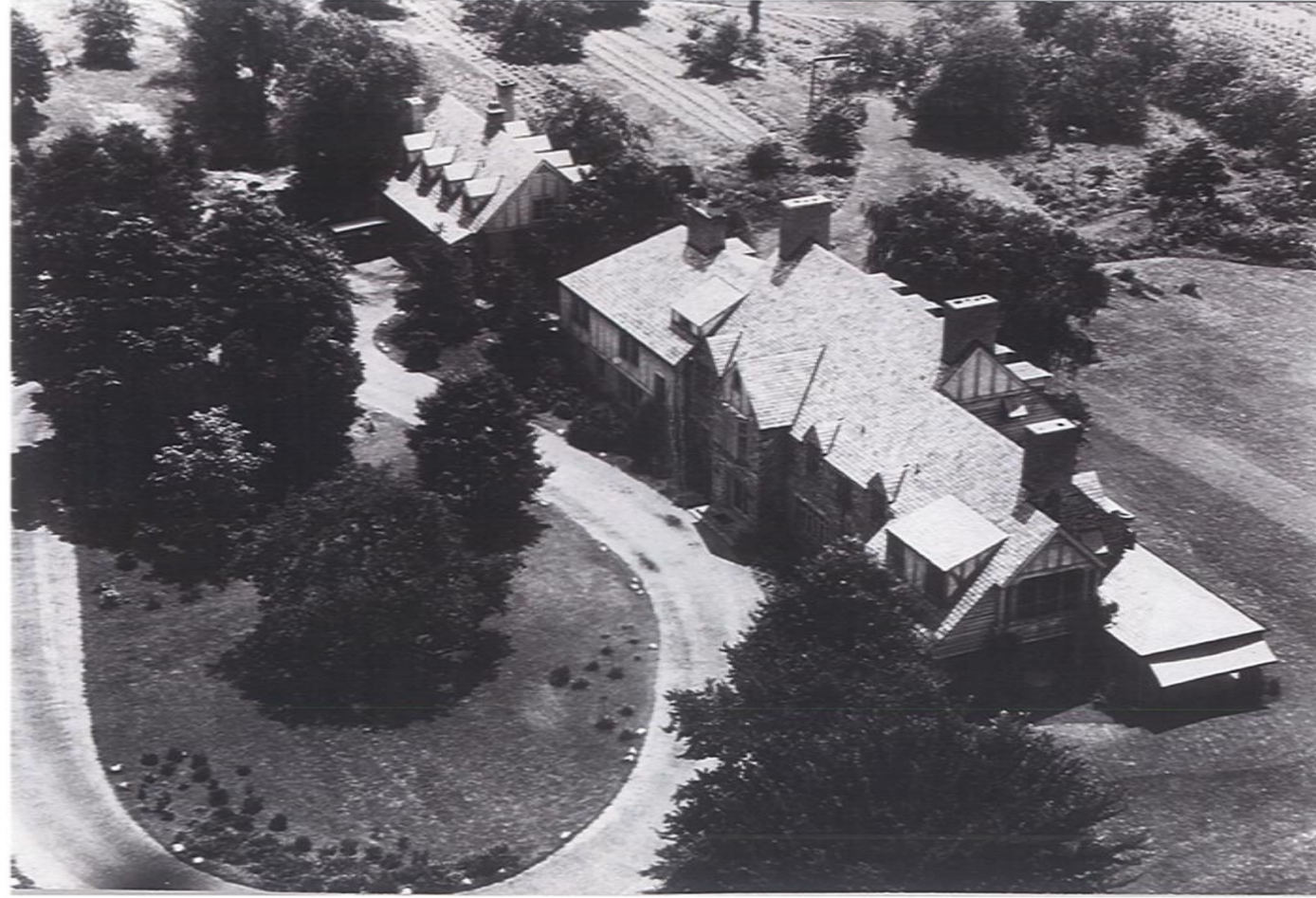


Photo 2 is an undated aerial photo that shows agricultural fields and pastures next to the GPFB and the garage. This photo defines a very small manicured space with pastures, fields and orchards near by. This forms the basis for our recommendation as it shows a limited space outside the building that wasn't dedicated to farming.

Photo 3



Photo 4



Photos 3 and 4 show the views of the building from the pond on the property. It is difficult to see the building from the pond today. The old photo shows a pasture fence where the land slopes down. This is the basis for our recommendation on environmental setting on the southern edge of the property.

Photo 5



Photo 6



Photos 5 and 6 show the front of the GPFH. The older photo is a close view showing what the Grosvenors valued about the home from this angle, namely the West wing of the house which was the family's quarters. The modern photo shows the entire front façade showing the East wing which was servant quarters and is in a distinct style from the rest of the home.

Photo 7

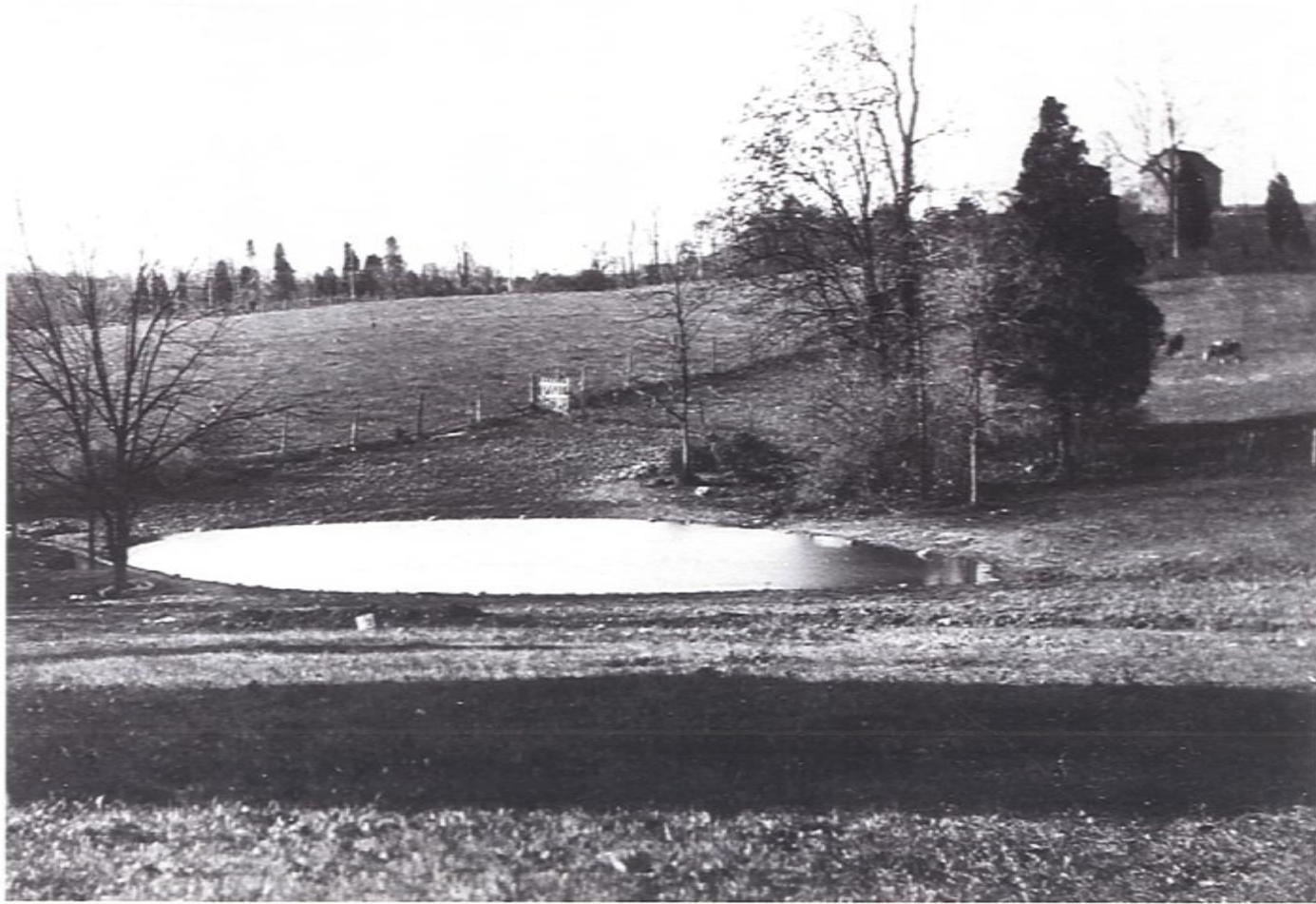


Photo 8



Photos 7 and 8 show the view from the garage to the man made pond. The view from the historical photo shows an open pasture land with a clear view to the pond. The modern photo shows the view today includes modern office building and vegetation that has grown in front of the pond.

Photo 9



Photo 10

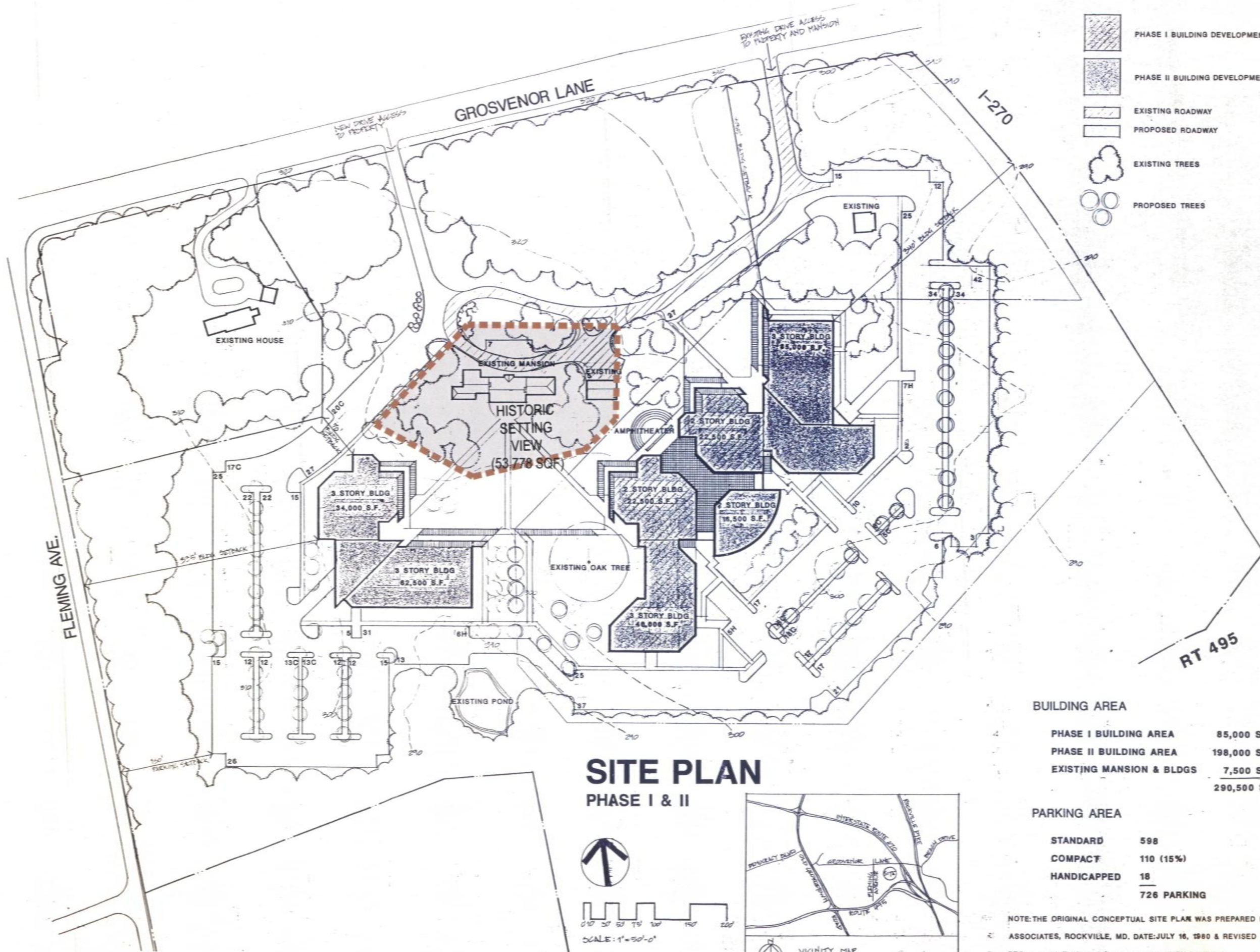


Photos 9 and 10 show damage to the caretakers house from a tree falling from recent storms. The ground became so saturated that the roots gave way and the tree fell directly on the caretakers house causing significant damage.



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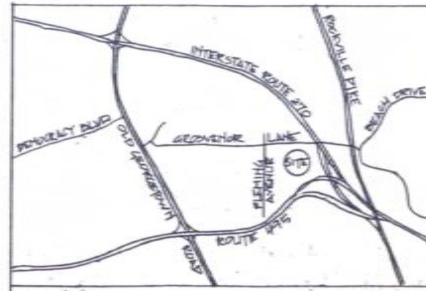


SITE PLAN

PHASE I & II



SCALE: 1" = 50'-0"



BUILDING AREA	
PHASE I BUILDING AREA	85,000 S.F.
PHASE II BUILDING AREA	198,000 S.F.
EXISTING MANSION & BLDGS	7,500 S.F.
TOTAL	290,500 S.F.

PARKING AREA	
STANDARD	598
COMPACT	110 (15%)
HANDICAPPED	18
TOTAL	726 PARKING

NOTE: THE ORIGINAL CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN WAS PREPARED BY DNC ASSOCIATES, ROCKVILLE, MD. DATE: JULY 16, 1980 & REVISED ON DEC. 8, 1980. THIS INFORMATION WAS GIVEN BY RNR.



739 Hensley Woods Blvd., Suite 800
P.O. Box 6437
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 971-2222

414 Hargrave Drive, Suite 444
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 702-9776

Comm. Date: 2/11/87
Drawn: C.F.
Prof. Mgr.

RNR PHASE I & II
RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.

1 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
2 HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

3 **STAFF EXHIBIT**
4 **RECEIVED BY MCPB**

5 **DATE:** 3/24/08
6 **ITEM NO.** 4
7 **EXHIBIT NO.** 2A

8 ----- X
9 :
10 MASTER PLAN EVALUATIONS :
11 Wild Acres Estate :
12 :
13 ----- X

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25
A meeting in the above-entitled matter was held on
April 23, 2008, commencing at 7:34 p.m., in the MRO
Auditorium at 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland
20910, before:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Jef Fuller

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Timothy Duffy
David Rotenstein
Warren Fleming
Nuray Anahtar
Leslie Miles
Caroline Alderson
Lee Burstyn

1 finish then. Okay. My conclusion. I believe that this
2 property does have historical integrity because the location
3 and the setting, the design and materials have all been
4 retained, and it still conveys the estates semi-rural
5 suburban character.

6 The two office buildings there have been sited in
7 a sensitive way, so that one doesn't see them when looking
8 out from the building on the south side. And when you
9 combine them all together, they are, the environment and the
10 property itself is one of the relatively rare Tudor revival
11 style country houses of this period. And I believe it
12 warrants saving in its environmental setting.

13 I just want to acknowledge, thank people who
14 helped me on this, who went and got the photographs, and
15 also to thank the Montgomery County Historic Society, and
16 also the Library of Congress and National Geographic Society
17 that made some of their archives available to me. Thank
18 you. That's my presentation. Do you have any questions?

19 MR. FULLER: Thank you. Are there questions for
20 the nominator?

21 MS. WELLER: I'm sorry I ran so fast, but I was
22 running to get here. A bit out of breath. No.

23 MR. FULLER: Thank you very much.

24 MS. WELLER: Thank you.

→ 25 MR. FULLER: At this time, we would like to ask
26 the representatives of the owner to come forward. And we'll

1 also grant you 10 minutes to make a presentation. Good
2 evening and welcome. State your names for the record. As I
3 said, you will have 10 minutes.

4 MR. BURGOFFEN: Mark Burgoffen with Braverman,
5 Gotz and Gilday, attorney for the property owners, Society
6 of American Foresters.

7 MR. GOERGEN: Michael Goergen, chief executive
8 officer of the Society of American Forestry.

9 MR. LEBOVICH: Bill Lebovich, architectural
10 historian.

11 MR. KLINE: Jody Kline, land use attorney with
12 Miller, Miller and Canby, and I represent Nations Academy,
13 the contract purchaser of the property.

14 MR. BURGOFFEN: Mr. Chairman, and members of the
15 Commission, I want to thank you for the opportunity to be
16 here this evening to present to you our property and its
17 historic resources.

18 We'd like to pursue a course of action that is
19 mutually agreeable to all interested parties, and remain
20 hopeful that we can reach agreement. We appreciate the
21 historic nature of the Gifford-Pinchow Forestry Building,
22 the national headquarters of a 15,000 member Society of
23 American Foresters, and would support a designation that
24 does not significantly alter our plans and options for the
25 future.

26 Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a position

1 today where we can no longer afford to maintain the
2 building. The property is choked with invasive weeds. The
3 buildings are deteriorating. And the birds that the
4 Grosvenors once loved are largely gone, due to the suburban
5 encroachment and interstate highway system.

6 As a nonprofit organization, our resources are
7 limited, and we prefer to spend our precious dollars on
8 programs that improve the world's forest resources. It is
9 with this recognition that we have decided to sell our
10 headquarters and grounds to Nation's Academy, an
11 organization that has pledged to restore the mansion, and
12 maintain it for the future.

13 I would now like to introduce a historic
14 preservation expert, Mr. Bill Lebovich, who will discuss the
15 merits of the property, and after he concludes, Mr. Jody
16 Kline, who will make a statement for Nation's Academy.
17 Thank you.

18 MR. LEBOVICH: In evaluating the significance of
19 this property, I will depend primarily on the records of Dr.
20 and Mrs. Grosvenor and the National Geographic Society.
21 This 1927 image by Dr. Grosvenor shows the rolling fields
22 and long vista of this farm. His caption, along with the
23 writing of his wife and son commented on the numerous birds
24 once present in close proximity to the house, but not any
25 longer.

26 I apologize for the low light. The property was

1 seen as a working farm, not a so-called country estate, as
2 reflected in the title block of the 1915 survey done for Dr.
3 Grosvenor. He raised horses and pigs, along with chickens.
4 And he sold the eggs to the National Geographic Society
5 cafeteria several times a week.

6 On the full view of the 1915 plat, one can see
7 that the property was into cultivated fields near the house,
8 which is, here is the original house, cultivated fields are
9 straight down, pastures south of the house with woodlands
10 and open fields -- woodlands and open fields to the right.
11 The close in planting area and more distant pastures are
12 clear in this early view. Cultivated field and pastures
13 farther down.

14 None of this survived, as can be seen by comparing
15 the early photo from the back lawn to pond, and current
16 photo from side of pond back towards house.

17 In this photograph the Grosvenors, Tafts and
18 friends are gathered on the west law. This placement is not
19 coincidental, as the most important entertaining rooms are
20 at the west ends of the house, connected by the open porch,
21 the west lawn, and the west half of the house is the most
22 architecturally ambitious.

23 In these later photographs of the Grosvenors, at
24 the front and back of the house, the camera is positioned,
25 again, to place the emphasis on the west end of the house
26 and lawn. To the Grosvenors, the west lawn was an extension

1 of the interior entertaining space, and along with the
2 adjacent laws at the front and back of the house, probably
3 the most treasured outdoor space. They also had bird
4 feeders nearby.

5 The east end of the south lawn has been severely
6 compromised by the new building. Even as late as 1969, much
7 of the defining features, specifically the open pasture
8 space and its vista remained. Routes I-270 and 495
9 seriously impacted the property and caused the driveway to
10 be reconfigured. Here. This is the house. These are the
11 lawn vistas. There is the Beltway. There is 270.

12 The change from a large rectangular parcel of
13 approximately 105 acres, to something less than half, is
14 best seen by comparing the 1940's real estate map, and a
15 Grosvenor plat done nearly 30 years later. Up here is the
16 house. And here is the land being divided, the beltway,
17 270, and the park, Montgomery County park.

18 These photos of the forest reflect how thoroughly
19 the setting has changed. This is the line that's looking
20 from the property at the beltway, and that's looking back
21 across the beltway at the property in question.

22 Where there are properties being nominated for
23 designation at the County, State, or national levels of
24 government, it is required that the property have one,
25 significance, and two, physical integrity to convey how it
26 appeared at the time of the property's significance.

1 The farm setting has been destroyed, and is
2 unrecognizable due to the growth of the forest on the
3 pastoral field. However, the preserved house and the
4 immediate area around the house, for their historical
5 association with the Grosvenors and how they lived and
6 entertained, and the house's architectural significance,
7 should be designated.

8 Applying the relevant National Register of
9 Historic Places in Maryland historical trust standards, the
10 boundaries for this property must be limited to the area
11 that retains its association with the Grosvenors and is
12 reflective of how they used their property. Those
13 boundaries, therefore, should be the immediate area around
14 the house, and if deemed worthy, small areas around the less
15 important altered garage and carriage. Thank you.

16 MR. KLINE: As I mentioned, my name is Jody Kline.
17 I represent Nations Academy, and you probably are saying,
18 Mr. Kline, you were anticipating a HAWP application where
19 you would be putting a board up there. I wanted to show
20 you, basically, what's going on on the property.

21 This is not, as you can tell from the ballet
22 you've had already, this is not a designation issue. We are
23 not opposing designation. The environmental setting,
24 however, is critical to what happens for us in the future
25 and the process we have to go through.

26 Nations Academy has filed a petition for special

1 exception with the County to seek permission to construct
2 and operate a private school on the property. And I can
3 tell you from the day that a pencil was put on paper for
4 this school, for this proposed school, the designers have
5 understood the importance of the future of the property,
6 with its history and its buildings.

7 I know that it is your practice that at the time
8 of designation you go ahead and designate the whole
9 property, or in this case the 27 acres that were nominated,
10 and then go ahead and deal with the size of that area to be
11 assessed for a HAWP permit later on, with an application or
12 when a development proposal is before you.

13 In this case, it is the development proposal that
14 triggered the nomination itself. We have before us today
15 the information adequate to make an assessment of the
16 importance of the buildings, and what the impact of the
17 school would be on those buildings.

18 And I would like to reiterate a request I made
19 already to the chairman that said we would like what I will
20 call a courtesy review or I think you call them a
21 preliminary discussion. This does not have to go all the
22 way, you know, ultimately it will go through to have the
23 site put on the Master Plan for historic preservation, but
24 it does not have to go through and we have to sit and wait
25 until such time as it is designated and then come back to
26 you for your recommendation to the Board of Appeals.

1 We will lose not only several months in doing
2 that, but lose basically opening a whole academic year later
3 because of the sequence of construction.

4 What we would like, is an opportunity to show you
5 how we can deal with the buildings on the property in
6 sensitive way that would allow it to be designated that
7 would still not necessarily substantially prejudice our
8 special exception.

9 At a minimum, I would ask that you try and give
10 your staff some guidance so we can sit down with them; they
11 can, in fact, tell us what they have heard from you; what
12 their advice to us is going to be, what their advice is
13 going to be later on on the HAWP permit, and then we can
14 work with the special exception process to address that.

15 We need guidance from you, and we think that the
16 information, a lot of the information is there that you
17 could go ahead and provide that today. And it does not have
18 to go all the way through the Council while our special
19 exception sits and waits and is reactivated sometime
20 probably late this year or early next year. Thank you.

21 MR. FULLER: Is that the end of your presentation?

22 MR. KLINE: Yes.

23 MR. FULLER: Thank you for being brief. Are there
24 questions for the property owner? Okay. Thank you. And
25 I'll move into the other speakers.

26 MS. ALDERSON: Actually, just one, please.

1 MR. FULLER: All right.

2 MS. ALDERSON: Would you like to take a moment to
3 explain what the picture is illustrating in relation to the
4 overall site that we have examined in the first
5 presentation?

6 MR. KLINE: I'll just speak from here if you can
7 pick it up. Thank you.

8 MS. ALDERSON: Perhaps if you could explain that
9 in relation to the plan that we have here.

10 MR. KLINE: This is basically the state of our
11 site plan for the special exception application. It's
12 actually in the hands of the staff in this building, being
13 reviewed.

14 Just to orient you, I-270 on the right hand side.
15 495 and the beltway down on the lower right hand corner.
16 Grosvenor Lane across the top of the property running out
17 along the far west side. And Fleming Park as mentioned by
18 the staff.

19 The entrance is the same, the same location as it
20 is today, if you have a chance to make a site visit. The
21 Academy would like, however, to be able to accommodate the
22 large volume of traffic coming on the property.

23 Commission Alderson asked me to kind of correlate
24 it to the exhibit that you've got here, and I would say the
25 blue in the upper right hand corner is the Grosvenor house
26 today, where Mr. Grosvenor lives today. The red area,

1 essentially, basically picks up our proposed athletic field
2 on the right, sweeps across the front of the property.

3 The core in yellow is where the special exception
4 buildings currently exist for the Society of American
5 Forestry, the Natural Resources Foundation, and other
6 charitable institutes in those buildings. And then we're
7 basically everything you see down in green has been
8 designated under the Legacy Open Space Program to be
9 preserved in its natural state, either public or private
10 ownership. So that won't be touched at all.

11 And that's one of the interesting issues related
12 to what is going on. And we're going to come to point out
13 where things are.

14 In the middle of the red, the house itself is
15 located -- I'm pointing to it on my special exception, but
16 it's shown in the middle of the red area. The garage is
17 accordingly, of course, immediately to the right of that.
18 And in approximately in the upper left hand corner of the
19 competition athletic field is where the caretakers house is
20 going to be.

21 When we started on this, we basically had enough
22 room that we could have probably accommodated those
23 buildings, if they were appropriate to do so. What did
24 happen, though, is the Legacy Open Space designation came
25 along, and probably maybe more than we expected, it was
26 drawn as a hard line. So what happened was the entire

1 academic buildings all started to move to the north. They
2 have to crest as well, but they basically had to be further
3 to the north.

4 And the interesting tension on this project is
5 those 35 acres. When you start trying to preserve trees
6 along the east side, a belt of trees so that the respective
7 folks who drive on Grosvenor now don't really want to see
8 what's going on on the property. And then the Legacy Open
9 Space area. Our site is constrained. And that's why you
10 hear us here talking about trying to work out an
11 environmental setting that would be, allow us to be able to
12 come in with buildings where we want to construct them on
13 the property.

14 The idea is to go ahead and use the mansion as
15 some sort of adaptive reuse or an educational facility
16 itself, and maintain as much of the field in the back as we
17 can. This dormitory building is for international students.

18 I guess I should add Nations Academy is attended -- I'm
19 beyond the scope, more than --

20 MR. FULLER: Very quick.

21 MR. KLINE: Suffice it to say, this is a dorm
22 where students come from overseas who will be living on the
23 property. It's architectural treatment will be, have cues
24 and basically remnants, excuse me, take cues from the main
25 buildings so that they would look like they were together.
26 That was probably a longer answer than you expected.

1 MS. ALDERSON: Thank you.

2 MR. FULLER: Okay. Any other questions for the
3 property owner? All right. At this point I would like to
4 go through some of the other speakers. We have three
5 speakers that are representing groups. I would like to ask
6 the three of you to come forward together. Each of you will
7 be giving seven minutes.

8 We have Michael Diehl representing Fleming Park
9 Community Association. We have Sheryl Lee representing
10 Wildwood Manor Citizens Association. And we have Wayne
11 Goldstein representing Preservation, Inc.

12 MS. LEE: Can I just say, I'm Sheryl Lee and I was
13 going to cede my time to Julia. I prepared my testimony and
14 sent it in, so I don't have to speak.

15 MR. FULLER: Thank you. Please, if you would
16 state your name for the record? You have seven minutes.
17 Thank you.

18 MR. DIEHL: Thank you. My name is Michael Diehl,
19 and I am the president of the Fleming Park --

20 MR. FULLER: Excuse me.

21 MR. DIEHL: I'm sorry?

22 MR. FULLER: It's five. I was corrected. It's
23 five minutes, not seven.

24 MR. DIEHL: Five minutes. Okay. My name is
25 Michael Diehl. I'm the president of the Fleming Park
26 Community Association, and we represent 470, approximately

DATE: 5/29/08
ITEM NO. 4
EXHIBIT NO. JB

----- Forwarded message -----
From: <WildwoodNews@aol.com>
Date: Mon, May 19, 2008 at 9:06 AM
Subject: Please Support the Grosvenor Property Historic
Preservation Nomination
To: WildwoodNews@aol.com

As you know, Nations Academy has filed a Special Exception to build a private school for 1660 students on the Wild Acres site on Grosvenor Lane.

The property has been nominated by a member of our community (Julia Weller, Rossmore Court) for inclusion on the Historic Register which could drastically limit development plans on the site.

Nations Academy has agreed that they will preserve the mansion (only) as they deem appropriate but we feel an "official" designation would prevent any disagreements in the future during development. In addition to the mansion, the other original structures and part of the environmental setting have been nominated and the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission unanimously voted to recommend the entire site for designation.

(You may have received a letter from Nations stating they support the nomination. They support the nomination of the mansion ONLY, not the environmental setting. Our nomination includes all the original buildings and the lawn directly adjacent to the mansion).

The nomination now goes before the Montgomery County Planning Board and then on to the County Council. Lawyers for Nations Academy and the property owners are lobbying hard against designation. We need your support!

Here's what you can do to help:

Send a letter of support to the Planning Board TODAY or TOMORROW. Your letter can be emailed to: mcp-chairman@mncppc-mc.org. Here's an example of what the letter should say:

Royce Hanson, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RE: Wild Acres Historic Preservation Nomination

Dear Mr. Hanson,

I am writing to express my support for the Wild Acres Historic Preservation Nomination. I hope you will agree with the Historic Preservation Commission and vote to include the mansion, the other original structures on the property and the environmental setting surrounding the mansion.

The Wild Acres property is an important part of the history of Bethesda. It is important that this resource is recognized as such. For that reason I ask you to support the nomination.

Sincerely,

xxxxxx

Another way to help: Attend the Planning Board Hearing on May 29 at 9:00 am. Your presence in the hearing room is important (plus is it actually very interesting to see the Planning Board in action)! Please consider giving a few hours of your time to support the nomination. Bring your friends and neighbors. It is important for the Planning Board to see how passionate the neighborhood feels about preserving this property.

Attached is a fact sheet with more information on the nomination.

Questions? Please call Cheryl Leahy at (301) 370-2484.

Many thanks to Julia Weller (Rossmore Court) who prepared and presented the nomination!

Wondering what's for Dinner Tonight? Get new twists on family favorites at AOL Food <<http://food.aol.com/dinner-tonight?NCID=aolfod00030000000001>>.

May 29, 2008

Anne C. Martin
301.961.5127
amartin@linowes-law.com

Hand Delivered with Hearing Testimony

The Honorable Royce Hanson
Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Public Hearing Draft Amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* #30/15
Wild Acres (Grosvenor Estate), 5400 Grosvenor Lane

Dear Chairman Hanson and Members of the Planning Board:

On behalf of the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation (“RNRF”), the owner of the existing special exception use on the above-referenced site (the “Property”) and the owner of the adjacent property, we respectfully request that the Planning Board limit the designation of historic preservation on the Property to the former Grosvenor home and only the immediate surroundings of the house, as requested by the owner of the Property, the Society of American Foresters (“SAF”), and the contract purchaser, the Nations Academy. Such a limited and defined boundary is consistent with: 1) the Historic Preservation criteria in Section 24A-3 of the Code with respect to the historical association with the Grosvenor family and the architecture of the house; 2) the intent of the Grosvenor family in its previous development applications; 3) the existing approvals for the full development of the Property for the RNRF use, which was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Planning Board and its Staff, and reviewed and granted by the Board of Appeals in 1973, and continuously reapproved over the past 35 years; and 4) the specific recommendations for the Property by the Planning Board and County Council in the 1992 North Bethesda Garrett Park Master Plan (the “North Bethesda Master Plan”). Further, a limited designation is consistent with previous recommendations by the Planning Board and Council for large acreage properties.

As stated in Staff Report, the Board of Appeals originally approved the RNRF special exception use in 1973 for 300,000 square feet of office uses. However, a review of the current

The Honorable Royce Hanson

May 29, 2008

Page 2

approved Special Exception Site Plan (the "Site Plan", last modified and approved pursuant to the Board of Appeals opinion dated March 21, 1990) and the history of the approvals should also be included in your consideration. As indicated on the Site Plan, the RNRFF special exception approval includes removal of the caretaker's house and the addition of almost 100,000 square feet of new non-profit office development and associated parking in the southwest area of the Property that is included in the current recommendation for a historic setting.

All of the opinions issued by the Board of Appeals over the past 35 years (based on recommendations for approval by the Planning Board Staff) for the approval of the RNRFF special exception and the Site Plan demonstrate the continuing government approval and consensus that the Property is not historic, nor should the approved development be limited by any "setting". The opinion of the Board of Appeals dated January 31, 1974 (the "1974 Opinion") specifically references the conversion of the Grosvenor house to office uses and indicated that the office use was not objectionable to the Wildwood Citizens Association. Additionally, the 1974 Opinion noted that the original special exception plans included a new office building in the same location as the house in the later phase of the RNRFF development. Therefore, it was "not certain at the time whether the mansion will ultimately be removed." The opinion issued by the Board of Appeals dated September 23, 1980 references the reapproval of the Board of Appeals (pursuant to the recommendations of the Planning Board Staff) of the RNRFF development with driveways and office buildings in locations proximate to the former Grosvenor house (within 90 to 100 feet). The future office development for the additional buildings and parking areas for the RNRFF use, referred to as Phase II, was specifically approved by the Board of Appeals by opinion dated March 13, 1991. Further, the Board of Appeals (and Planning Board Staff) continued to review and approve (with the support of the community) minor modifications to the RNRFF special exception in 1999 and 2004.

It is important to note that the continuous decision by RNRFF and SAF to keep the Grosvenor house and to incorporate the Grosvenor house into the campus of non-profit office buildings in the 1990 Site Plan was voluntary because it was consistent with the RNRFF and SAF mission and design principles. The preservation of the former Grosvenor house was not requested by the community, not recommended as a condition of approval by the Planning Board or its Staff, and was not a requirement of the Board of Appeals. Further, the decision to keep the structure did not alter the nature of the RNRFF special exception approval of the additional modern office buildings and parking lots on the Property.

The Honorable Royce Hanson

May 29, 2008

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Another item to note in the history of the Property, is that before RNRF purchased the Property (along with the current RNRF property and Fleming Park, all combined the "Grosvenor Property"), in the early 1970's, the Grosvenor family had initially sought a zoning reclassification of the Grosvenor Property for multi-family development, similar to the multi-family zoning on the Grosvenor's properties to the east of US 70. Pursuant to the illustrative site plan that the Grosvenor family submitted as part of the zoning applications for the Grosvenor Property to the R-20 and the R-T zones (Case Nos. F-491 and F-492) in 1969, the Grosvenor family had similarly only preserved the house, and had proposed driveways, townhomes and apartment buildings within the area now recommended to remain open as a "vista".

In addition to the continuous Planning Board and Board of Appeals recognition of the RNRF special exception over the past 35 years, the Planning Board and Council confirmed of the RNRF special exception approvals, and specifically supported the expansion, in the 1992 North Bethesda Master Plan. It is significant to note that the North Bethesda Master Plan specifically references the Grosvenor house and the original estate; however, neither the house nor the Property or any setting were recommended to be designated as historic resources. The recommendations in the North Bethesda Master Plan support the approved development in the existing RNRF special exception, which includes office buildings and driveways in the setting now recommended by Staff for designation.

Lastly, the limited designation is consistent with the current Staff recommendation for a setting of less than the 26.43 acre Property. Such a limited designation or setting is consistent with numerous other recommendations for large acreage parcels, particularly those that may not be further reduced to a single structure by subdivision.

Thank you for the consideration of our request to limit the designation that is before you today. As demonstrated by the approved RNRF special exception Site Plan for additional non-profit office buildings and parking on the Property and the confirmation and support of this approval in the North Bethesda Master Plan, the recommendation to limit the designation to the former Grosvenor house, and immediate setting is consistent with the long-established existing government development approvals for the Property. Further, RNRF and SAF, as well as Nations Academy's proposal as contract purchaser, have voluntarily maintained the Grosvenor house as part of the campus and we hope that such efforts will be recognized and encouraged by the Planning Board and that collaborative efforts can be made to effectively preserve the house without detrimental impacts to existing or proposed uses on the Property.

We have attached a copy of our hearing presentation for your convenience.

The Honorable Royce Hanson
May 29, 2008
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Very truly yours,

LINOWES AND BLOCHER LLP


Anne C. Martin

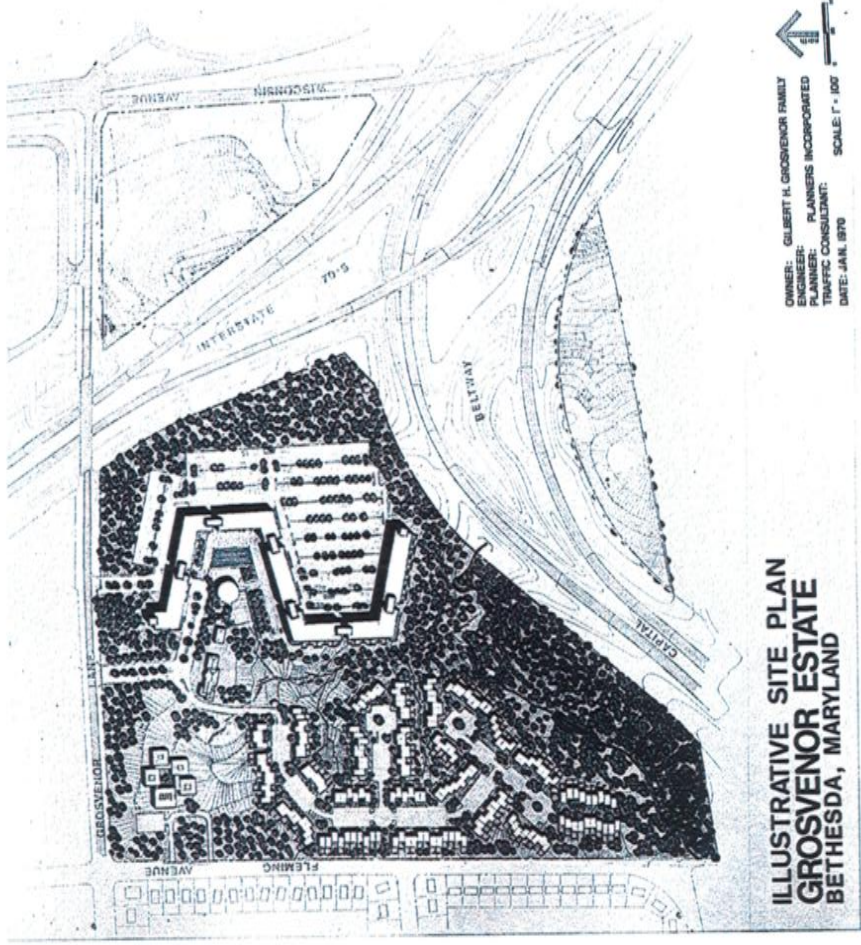
Attachment

L&B 1011762v1/04003.0024



- Renewable Natural Resources Foundation (RNRNF) – Special Exception owner since 1973 (and current adjacent property owner)
- Historic designation limited to Grosvenor house and a minimal setting is consistent with:
 - §24A Criteria for historical association of Grosvenor family and the house;
 - Previous Zoning Applications submitted by Grosvenor family in 1969;
 - Planning Board and Board of Appeals Review and Approval of RNRNF Special Exception Site Plan (1973, 1974, 1980, 1990, 1991, 1999, 2004); and
 - Specific Planning Board and Council recommendations for the Property in 1992 North Bethesda Garrett Park Master Plan

Grosvenor rezoning applications 1969-
Limited "setting" around mansion; "caretakers house" not preserved



ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN
GROSVENOR ESTATE
BETHESDA, MARYLAND

OWNER: GILBERT H. GROSVENOR FAMILY
ENGINEER: PLANNERS INCORPORATED
TRAFFIC CONSULTANT: SCALE: 1" = 100'
DATE: JAN. 1970

Approved RNRF Special Exception Site Plan: Limited "setting" around mansion; "caretakers house" not preserved



Board of Appeals approval for RNRF Special Exception - 1973 Opinion Excerpt

Case No. S-257

-2-

Program will include office buildings in a clustered court-like arrangement, none to be higher than three stories. The Center would become the national headquarters of each of the member societies; as the various buildings become completed for the society their offices would be located at the Center.

Each Society has a number of requirements which are common to all and in order to conserve space and minimize the duplication of similar functions, a central services facility is planned, i.e., conference and seminar facilities, a library, a public information center, food service and the central administration offices. Supervision of the Center will be the responsibility of the directors.

The Center would also include an arboretum, ponds and nature trails. The member societies would use the grounds of the Center as an outdoor laboratory for research on improving environmental quality. Petitioner was of the opinion that by sharing equipment and facilities the Societies would be able to carry out their tasks more effectively and economically.

The existing mansion will be retained and used as headquarters for the Foundation during all phases of development. Petitioner anticipated that the first phase of development would be open to the public by January, 1976. A decision would be made at the conclusion of the ultimate development as to ultimate use, if any, of the mansion.

Petitioner anticipates that the ultimate size of the project is to be approximately 300,000 square feet of office space; the first phase is anticipated to include 102,000 gross square feet, to be constructed over a five year period; the second phase would be for approximately 181,000 square feet constructed over the next five years; and the ultimate third phase would take place over the following ten years. The Foundation anticipates that it would take 20 years to complete the entire project.

The architect supplied information that rather than plan the development of the site to its maximum, he had been urged to underdevelop the property. Approximately 12 acres of the tract is anticipated to be purchased by the Park Department for a park site. Acquisition of the 12 acres would reduce the area of the application to 35 acres. Although access would be available on both Fleming Avenue and Grosvenor Lane, petitioner proposes to enter the site via Grosvenor Lane only. The Master Plan for the North Bethesda Garrett Park Planning Area classifies Grosvenor Lane as a primary street with a proposed 70-foot right-of-way and a 36-foot wide pavement with curbs, gutters and sidewalks. The current Montgomery Capital Improvement program does not propose further improvement of Grosvenor Lane.

Board of Appeals approval for RNRF Special Exception – 1974 Opinion Excerpt

Case No. S-257

-3-

approximates 100 gallons per person per day. With office use for 35 full-time employees, the sewage discharge from the mansion and garage-apartment will be an estimated 875 gallons per day.

The proposed parking lot will be surfaced with porous gravel and no water run-off is anticipated. The parking will be located in cleared areas among existing trees on the grounds, and will accommodate 35 automobiles. Maximum capacity needed for employees is estimated to be 20 spaces. The additional spaces will be provided in order to accommodate visitors. It was estimated that 5 percent of the employees would reside near the site, that approximately 50 percent would come from the south and would use Grosvenor Lane, and that the others would come from Old Georgetown Road.

The proposed hours for the offices would be staggered from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The petitioners expect a decrease in number of cars when the Metro is constructed and have agreed to supply a shuttle bus between the Metro station and the subject site.

The petitioners propose that the mansion will remain and be used during construction of all of phases 1 and 2, but that the proposed plan would locate the building to be constructed during phase 3 on approximately the same site as the mansion. However, it was pointed out that phase 3 is planned for 10 years in the future and petitioners are not certain at this time whether the mansion will ultimately be removed. In any event, they are requesting to use the mansion and garage for several years.

Based on the additional testimony and evidence presented for the record, the Board finds that the proposed use of the mansion and other modifications requested will not alter the findings of the Board contained in its original opinion. For this reason, the request to use the mansion and garage for office space in the immediate future preceding completion of construction plans, and the requested modifications to the Board's opinion are granted as follows:

1. The mansion and garage may be remodeled in accordance with the testimony and evidence presented with Exhibit 37 in the record, for office space use for 35 full time employees and up to 15 part time employees, with no more than 50 office employees working in these facilities at any one time.
2. On page 2, third full paragraph of the Board's opinion issued November 21, 1973, shall be deleted

Board of Appeals approval for RNRF Special Exception- 1980 Opinion Excerpt

COUNTY BOARD OF APPEALS
FOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Case No. S-257

Telephone
Area 301
279-1225

PETITION OF RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION

RESOLUTION TO REOPEN THE RECORD TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL MATERIAL (Resolution adopted September 23, 1980)

The Board received a letter dated July 21, 1980, from Harry W. Lerch, attorney for the special exception holder, with attached plans, specifications, exterior design and a detailed site plan showing exits and entrances, driveways, parking layout, etc., for Phases one and two. Upon receipt of the foregoing letter, the Board submitted the plans to the staff of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) for review and recommendation. The Board received a memorandum dated September 11, 1980, from the Development Review Division, M-NCPPC, stating that "...the technical staff has reviewed architectural, site-plans submitted on behalf of the applicant and the compliance of these plans with the conditions of the Board of Appeals Opinion ..."

Therefore, the letter dated July 21, 1980, shall become Exhibit No. 41(a), and the plans shall become Exhibit No. 42(a)-(e), consisting of site plan for Phase I and II, floor plans for building I, Phase I, elevations for building I, Phase I, and Exhibit No. 43, aerial photograph with overlay. The M-NCPPC memorandum dated September 11, 1980, shall become Exhibit No. 46.

BE IT RESOLVED by the County Board of Appeals for Montgomery County, that the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission having reviewed the material submitted by the special exception holder and finding the plans to be in compliance with the conditions of the Board of Appeals, conditions, the plans shall be and hereby are approved and shall become part of the record, subject to the following condition:

The special exception holder shall provide for 726 parking spaces on its site plan, as noted by the M-NCPPC staff recommendation, page 5, of Exhibit No. 46, said revised site plan to be submitted for the record.

The foregoing Resolution was proposed by Marjorie H. Sonnenfeldt, Chairman, and concurred in by Doris Lipschitz, Shirley S. Lynne, Joseph E. O'Brien, Jr., and Wallace I. Babcock.

Board of Appeals approval for RNRF Special Exception - 1990 Opinion Excerpt

Case No. S-257-A

- 2 -

Concerning the Foundation's request to eliminate the condition requiring a shuttle bus, Mr. Day stated that the employees working at RNRF unfortunately do not use public transportation. Mr. Day explained that the space is occupied by many different environmental organizations and that work hours are very irregular, which makes the use of public transportation or carpools infeasible for most persons. Another complication is the fact that while the Grosvenor Metro station is convenient to this location, most persons working on this site do not live in proximity of a metro station or even bus transportation. Mr. Day submitted the results of a questionnaire (Ex. 11) which shows that 2/3 of the people working at RNRF drive their private vehicle and would not use public transportation even if there was a cost attached to the parking and public transportation was subsidized.

Denis Canavan, Development Review Division, MNCPPC confirmed his written report (Ex. 5) which recommended approval of the new site plan, but disapproval of the deletion of condition #6. He stated that he and Alex Hekimian had met with petitioner but could not come to an agreement. Mr. Hekimian, Transportation Division, MNCPPC submitted a memorandum (Ex. 12) stating new conditions in lieu of condition #6. Mr. Metz stated that these new conditions, which included subsidies for employees using public transportation and subsidies for a vanpool, were not acceptable and in view of the results of the above cited questionnaire seemed meaningless.

Staff then agreed to analyze the potential cost of a subsidy program and submit a memo (Ex. 12).

FINDINGS OF THE BOARD

The Board carefully analyzed the oral testimony as well as the written submissions by staff and by petitioner. There is no disagreement about the changes in the site plan and the Board is pleased that petitioner changed the configuration of the buildings in order to save a 300-year-old oak tree. Concerning condition #6, the Board finds that the compromise suggested by petitioner that implementation of the condition be delayed until occupancy of Building IV is acceptable. The Board is anxious to see the Ride-On bus service a successful undertaking and in order to encourage employees of RNRF to use this service, RNRF must install a bus shelter.

The requested modification is hereby granted to petitioner only, subject to the following conditions:

1. Construction must be in conformance with the new site plan (Ex. 4(b)).
2. Petitioner is bound by all the conditions of the original grant, except condition #6.
3. At the time of occupancy of Building IV - 170,000 square feet - petitioner must provide a shuttle bus service between RNRF and the Grosvenor Metro station during the hours of operation of the center.

- Board of Appeals approvals of Minor Modifications to RNRF Special Exception (and review by Planning Board Staff) in 1991, 1999, and 2004;
- Historic Designation for Grosvenor mansion or Property never raised



1992 North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan

- * Specific support of approved ultimate RNRFF development;
- * No recommendation for historic designation

19. RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION

This property extends to 35.4 acres and is located south of Grosvenor Lane and in between I-495 and I-270. The existing zoning is R-90.

The property owned by the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation and the Society of American Foresters is part of the original 100-acre family estate of the late Dr. Gilbert H. Grosvenor, former president of the National Geographic Society. The estate remained intact until purchase of 40 acres by the State Highway Administration for the I-495/I-270 interchange; the balance went to the Pooks Hill Marriot, Grosvenor Mews townhouses, and the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation, which conveyed a portion to M-NCPPC for Fleming Park.

In 1973, the Board of Appeals granted the petition of the Foundation to operate a scientific society headquarters as a special exception use in the R-90 Zone. The ultimate size of the project was anticipated to be 300,000 square feet, to be developed in three phases. The first two phases, totaling 283,000 square feet of offices, were approved in the 1973 opinion, which included a requirement for review of Phase 1 by the Board before work was begun on Phase 2. A second review of Phases 1 and 2 took place in 1980.

To date, the original Grosvenor mansion has been renovated for use as the Gifford Pinchot Forestry Building, and two office buildings have been constructed (1981 and 1987). The FAR of the existing 44,000 square feet is .02, and the FAR of the final plan will be 0.19, in 2- to 3-story buildings. Ultimate development under the Foundation's approved comprehensive site plan for the entire property will provide 300,000 square feet of office space, including a 16,500 square foot conference and common-services facility, housed in seven buildings. The office structures plus surface parking will occupy 10 acres of the 35.

This Plan supports the planned expansion of the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation and the Society of American Foresters as a special exception approved by the Board of Appeals in the existing R-90 Zone.

Limited Designation –
Consistent with Staff recommendation of less than the full parcel;
Consistent with historic designation recommendations for other parcels
and/or larger acreage parcels:

NAME: MT. ZION CHURCH AND CEMETERY (ATLAS #30/18)

ADDRESS: 10200 Old Georgetown Road

HISTORY/DESCRIPTION: This church on a hill above Old Georgetown Road was built in 1910 and remodeled in 1950. It houses one of the earliest Baptist congregations in the County. The cemetery associated with the church has been in continuous use since 1864, and contains plots of local families including the Magruders, Veirs, Beanes, Darcys and Rileys. The structure is covered in white pebble dash, with a brick addition. Known as The Church in the Wildwood, its name is reflected in the nearby late-20th century Wildwood Shopping Center and Wildwood Manor Subdivision.

CURRENT USE: Church and cemetery.

PLANNING ISSUES: The widening of Old Georgetown Road has altered the once rural setting of the church and resulted in a high retaining wall which would be visually improved with planting.

PLAN RECOMMENDATION: Designate only the Mt. Zion Cemetery on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Remove the Mt. Zion Church structure and other related buildings located on the site from the Locational Atlas.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: Cemetery parcel only.

Limited Designation consistent with historic designation recommendations for larger acreage parcels

NAME: MADONNA OF THE TRAILS SCULPTURE (#35/14-2)

ADDRESS: Located next to the Bethesda Post Office, 7400 Wisconsin Avenue

HISTORY/DESCRIPTION: This sculpture, Madonna of the Trails, depicts a pioneer woman and her children. It was erected on Wisconsin Avenue in 1929 by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) as one of 12 such sculptures across the country marking the route taken by settlers to the West. It commemorates this country's pioneer women and their role in the country's westward expansion. The sculpture was moved during the construction of the Bethesda Metro Center from its place on the corner south of the Bethesda Post Office to its new location north of the Post Office.

CURRENT USE: Public art/commemorative sculpture

PLANNING ISSUES: The sculpture is part of the Bethesda Metro Center's site plan enforcement agreement. This agreement specifies that the DAR will maintain the sculpture and the Bethesda Metro Center developer will maintain the site. It is located in a CBD-3 Zone.

STATUS: On *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: Sculpture only



Limited Designation consistent with historic designation recommendations for larger acreage parcels

NAME: SMOKEHOUSE (ATLAS #30/4)

ADDRESS: 12012 Old Bridge Road

HISTORY/DESCRIPTION: Possibly built in the late 18th century, this hand-beam log smokehouse has been researched and restored by the current owner. It may be the last remnant of an early plantation or estate - possibly the Magruder or Riley plantation.

CURRENT USE: The smokehouse sits in the rear yard of a modern house in the Old Farm subdivision.

PLANNING ISSUES: None

PLAN RECOMMENDATION: On Locational Atlas and recommended for designation on the Master Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: Entire parcel, including existing 20th century house.

Limited Designation consistent with historic designation recommendations for other properties

NAME: WILSON'S STORE AND POST OFFICE (BETHESDA COMMUNITY PAINT AND HARDWARE STORE) (#35/14-7)

ADDRESS: 7250 Wisconsin Avenue

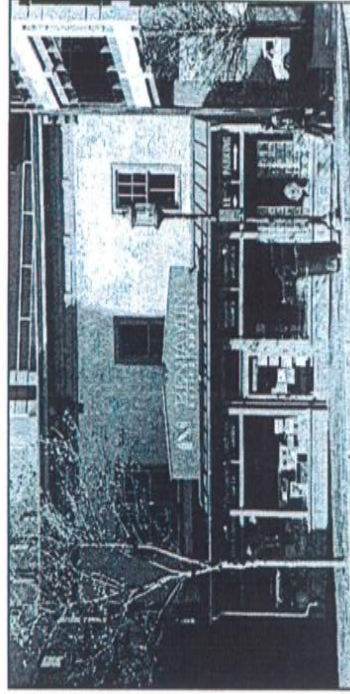
HISTORY/DESCRIPTION: This site is the only remaining commercial structure from Bethesda's early crossroads history. The two-story frame store was built in 1890, on the site of the original Rockville Pike toll booth, and is a good example of turn-of-the-century rural village commercial architecture. Originally the community's general store and post office, this property became a popular hardware store for several generations of Bethesda families in the 20th century. The store building was relocated 50 feet to the south and restored for retail use in 1988 as part of the Apex Building's optional method development.

CURRENT USE: Retail store

PLANNING ISSUES: This site retains its landmark status. It is zoned CBD-2.

STATUS: On *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: The footprint of the building.



Limited Designation consistent with historic designation recommendations for other properties:

NAME: TUDOR STYLE SHOPPING COMPLEX (#35/14-8)

ADDRESS: 7003-7029 Wisconsin Avenue and 4606 Leland Avenue

HISTORY/DESCRIPTION: This one-and-a-half-story stucco and frame shopping complex was designed in the Neo-Tudor half-timbered style popular in both commercial and domestic architecture in the early 20th century. The complex was built in 1926-27 on an 18,665-square-foot parcel by residential developers of the era, Monroe and Robert Bates Warren. It was constructed as a neighborhood shopping center with store bays adjacent to the sidewalk and a strong pedestrian orientation, predating the Automobile Era development. The complex is one of three Tudor style shopping centers remaining in the County. There are nine small owner-occupied businesses in this complex, excluding the later two-story business on the south end.

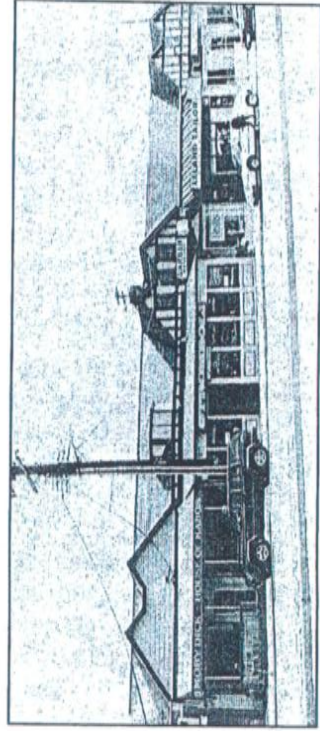
CURRENT USE: Retail shops

PLANNING ISSUES: The site is zoned CBD-1. Either standard or optional method redevelopment providing residential use in addition to existing retail would be allowed. Because the shops are in separate ownership, optional method redevelopment would require assemblage among the owners as well as with the adjacent site to meet the 22,000-square-foot site requirement.

HPC RECOMMENDATION: Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Meets ordinance criteria 1(A) as a unique neighborhood commercial development that predates automobile shopping centers; 1(D) for representing a builder-planned amenity which helped encourage the sale of homes in the Leland area; 2(A) for its Tudor Style design; and 2(E) as an established and familiar visual feature. The recommended setting would be the entire parcel of shops at 7003-7029 Wisconsin Avenue and 4606 Leland Avenue, excluding the two-story, southernmost shop at 7001 Wisconsin Avenue.

PLAN ACTION: Remove from the Locational Atlas, because of substantial alterations to the facades of the various shops, and because the property does not clearly meet the criteria of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

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Limited Designation consistent with historic designation recommendations for other properties:

NAME: MRS. WITHERS' HOUSE (#35/14-13)

ADDRESS: 7740 Old Georgetown Road

HISTORY/DESCRIPTION: Leslie W. Beall, one of the first grocers in the Bethesda area, built this two-and-a-half story, frame, American Four Square style house with Colonial Revival features and a tile roof in 1925. Mrs. Withers is Leslie Beall's daughter. She leased the property in 1986 for 99 years to the developers of the site with the specification that the house was to be incorporated in the design of any new development. It is now part of the Chevy Chase Garden Plaza, which covers the entire block at the corner of Atlington and Old Georgetown Roads.

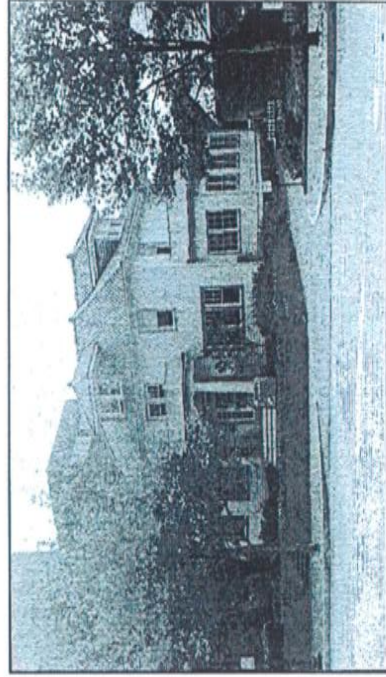
CURRENT USE: Antique store

PLANNING ISSUES: The site is zoned CBD-1. Preservation of the house was part of the optional method agreement when the site was redeveloped.

HPC RECOMMENDATION: Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Meets ordinance criteria 1(A) and 1(D) as a reflection of the residential character of the Bethesda CBD in the early 20th century-which has been largely lost in recent years; 2(A) as a characteristic and distinctive style of residential architecture popular in the first quarter of the 20th century, and 2(E) as an established and familiar visual feature of the Bethesda community, now incorporated into a new development. The environmental setting would be the footprint of the structure only.

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PLAN ACTION: Designate on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, under the same criteria and with the same environmental setting as noted by the HPC.



Limited Designation consistent with historic designation recommendations for larger acreage parcels:

Although Londonderry may not warrant historic designation, it is a relatively attractive structure which is located at an important intersection. This Plan suggests that some adaptive reuse of the house—as a restaurant or inn, for example—could be appropriate. The retention of Londonderry as part of the retail center is encouraged.

#19/5 Neelsville Presbyterian Church 20701 Frederick Road
This Plan concurs in the HPC's recommendation to designate this fine example of Gothic Revival design on the *Master Plan*. The Neelsville Presbyterian Church was built in 1877 with a sympathetic addition to the structure in 1929. Not only is this church significant for its place in the development of Presbyterianism in Montgomery County, but it is also unique architecturally. Gothic Revival detailing is evident in the steeply pitched roof, the arched windows, and the ornamental bargeboard in the front gable area. Of particular interest are the wooden buttresses which align both sections of the church building. Although these buttresses do not in all likelihood provide structural support to the building, they are a unique interpretation of a Gothic—and, usually, stone—design element in a wooden medium. In addition to the architectural and historical significance of the church, it is also important as a well-known landmark along Frederick Road.

The HPC recommended an environmental setting for this site of 2.5 acres, including the cemetery. This Plan recommends a reduced environmental setting of approximately 1.7 acres, a map of which is included in this appendix.

The widening of Route 355 will have no impact on the historic church or cemetery, since they are set well back from the right-of-way. There are a number of major developments planned for the portion of Germantown east of I-270. This proposed development will significantly change the existing character of this area. Thus, this Plan feels that the protection of Neelsville Presbyterian Church, through its designation as a landmark site and as a remnant of Germantown's past, is all the more important.

#19/6-1 Thundie Farmhouse 11200 Neelsville Church Road
The Thundie Farmhouse is a turn-of-the-century rural vernacular dwelling that has undergone considerable alterations, including the addition of aluminum siding and new bay and ash windows. These alterations have had a negative impact on the historical integrity of the house and it is not recommended for historic designation.

#19/6-2 Briggs Farmhouse 11301 Neelsville Church Road
This structure is an early-20th Century, wooden American Foursquare house. It is a good example of

the style and is relatively unaltered, except for a large addition to the rear of the house. It is very well-maintained.

After careful analysis of this resource—taking into account the detrimental impact of the addition and the proliferation of wooden American Foursquares in other parts of the county—this Plan has not recommended the Briggs Farmhouse for historic designation.

#19/7 Watkins Mill Site Watkins Mill Road
According to the 1974 research, only a shallow section of the race is visible and the mill building burned years ago. This is not one of the better mill sites in the County. This Plan finds this site does not warrant historic designation.

#19/8 Ward (E.G.) Log House Route 355
This resource was removed from the *Localist Atlas* in 1984.

#19/9 Rickett's Cemetery End of Rambling Road
Rickett's cemetery is an old family burial ground, but no structure is associated with it. No further concise history is referenced in the research. This resource is not recommended for placement on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

#19/10 Waring Viaduct B&O Railroad near Waring Station Road
This triple-arched viaduct over Great Seneca Creek is recommended for placement on the *Master Plan*. It was constructed in 1906 and is an excellent example of this type of bridge. This viaduct was built to replace an earlier wood trestle bridge as a result of the straightening and double tracking of the line between Germantown and Gaithersburg. It is important for its association with the B&O Railroad, the construction of which was instrumental in the development of Montgomery County.

The environmental setting for this resource should include only the footprint of the viaduct structure. There are no significant planning issues related to this historic resource.

#19/11 Waring-Crawford Farm 19100 Waring Station Road

This Plan recommends the Waring-Crawford Farm for placement on the *Master Plan*. This is a particularly distinguished farmhouse with a number of unique architectural features: the front facade bay, the two-story tower with pyramidal roof, and the turned column posts with decorative brackets. Like many farms in the area, the Waring-Crawford house started as a log and frame structure and evolved into a more architecturally sophisticated residence. The original portion of the property was probably built in 1881.

The original environmental setting recommended by the HPC was the 84.88 acre parcel. Since the HPC's evaluation, this parcel has been subdivided and devel-

Limited Designation consistent with historic designation recommendations for larger acreage parcels:

#19/24 Seyder/King MD 118 at Riffleford Road
Barn #2

The Park Historian reports that this barn "disappeared" 4-5 years ago. It is not recommended for historic designation.

#19/25 Germantown Baptist 17640 Riffleford Road
Church

This church is a 1938 replacement of the original 19th century church and meets none of the Ordinance criteria. It is not recommended for *Master Plan* designation.

#19/26 C.T. Leaman House 17600 Riffleford Road
The Leaman House was built in 1867, with an addition built around 1895 by Christian Leaman, one of the early settlers of Old Germantown. The house is a good example of a rural vernacular farmhouse, but has been substantially altered by several major new additions. These additions have changed the basic form of the house and, for this reason, this Plan is not recommending the C.T. Leaman House for *Master Plan* designation.

#19/27 John H. Cassaway 17200 Riffleford Road
Farm

This Plan recommends the Cassaway Farm for historic designation. This structure, built in 1872, is an unusual Victorian farmhouse with many fine decorative elements. Two two-story gabled sections are joined by a two-story galleried center section in an "H" plan. Some of the interesting architectural features include bracketed porch posts, scalloped bargeboards, and elaborate window treatments on the north facade. In addition to its architectural interest, the house is important for its association with John Hanson Cassaway. Mr. Cassaway was a leading citizen in the western part of the county in the 19th Century. He was president of Montgomery County Agricultural Society and operated a successful grain and fertilizer store in Germantown.

The environmental setting is the entire parcel of 6.95 acres, including the house, the bank barn, the corncrib, the fireplace, the windmill, and the slave quarters. There are no potential land use or transportation conflicts associated with this property.

#19/33 Cider Barrel 20410 Frederick Road

This Plan recommends the Cider Barrel for placement on the *Master Plan*. This distinctive roadside landmark was built in 1926 as a retail outlet for Andrew Baker's agricultural products: primarily cider and fresh apples. The Cider Barrel has been a well-known county feature for many years—the 1920's was a boom period when touring the countryside in private automobiles became a popular pastime and the Cider Barrel was always a favorite place to visit. It remains a successful business today. The structure is significant for its association with Andrew Baker, who was a prominent Germantown entrepreneur who spearheaded the move to build the Germantown Bank in 1922, serving as one of its first trustees. The Cider Barrel was noted as a unique resource in the HPC's recent survey of 20th Century historic sites. "No examples of auto-related signature architecture have been found in the County except for the Cider Barrel on Frederick Road north of Gaithersburg—".

The environmental setting is the footprint of the Cider Barrel and adjacent fruit stand, including the sign for the Cider Barrel.

The widening of Route 355 may have a detrimental impact on this historic resource.

Miscellaneous Cemeteries

Citizens in Germantown have pointed out several old cemeteries: the Old Methodist Church cemetery on Clappert Road, the Musser cemetery near Weis Market, and the Arnold cemetery. None of these sites have structures associated with them.

It has been a general policy to not designate cemeteries which are not associated with a building of some sort and which are not noteworthy or unusual. This Plan reaffirms this policy, but notes that each cemetery should continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Although this Plan does not recommend the designation of the Germantown cemeteries mentioned above, they should be taken into consideration and State laws governing cemeteries should be followed if new development will affect the plots.



- Historic designation limited to Grosvenor house and a minimal setting only is consistent with:
 - §24A Criteria for historical association of Grosvenor family and the house;
 - Previous Zoning Applications submitted by Grosvenor family in 1969;
 - RNRF Special Exception Recommendations and Approvals by the Planning Board and the Board of Appeals for the RNRF use and development (1973, 1974, 1980, 1990, 1991, 1999, 2004);
 - Specific Planning Board and Council recommendations for the Property in 1992 North Bethesda Garrett Park Master Plan; and
 - Limited nature (less than property boundary) of designation recommended by Staff; and with the Planning Board and Council designations for numerous other historic sites, particularly of large acreage

Royce Hanson, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

June 10, 2008

RE: Wild Acres Historic Preservation Nomination

Dear Mr. Hanson,

I am sending some additional documents that help support the effort to list Wild Acres, the Gilbert Grosvenor estate, as history worth preserving.

Enclosed find text and pictures from *America's Wonderlands*, published by the National Geographic in 1959. The text was written by Conrad L. Wirth, then Director of the U.S. National Park Service.

It describes some of the activity of Gilbert Grosvenor and the National Geographic Society in helping to acquire and preserve 2,239 acres of California sequoias and Russell Cave in Alabama with its 23,000 years of native American history.

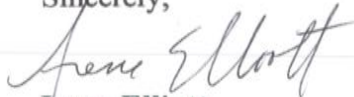
I find it incredibly ironic that we are having to fight to simply put Gilbert Grosvenor's own literal back yard on a historical register where those who wish to preserve our heritage will have a say in how the estate may be managed so to serve all the people, not just those with monetary interests.

Enclosed also find two aerial views from 1951 and the present. The intent of the nominator was to preserve the Gilbert Grosvenor country estate, as he would recognize it, and not the farm on which it was built. The maps clearly show the tree borders that were an important part of the estate, as they were in 1951 and as they still are, so far, in 2008. Although the estate is overgrown and neglected **I believe the Grosvenor family would recognize the view they planned and planted for.**

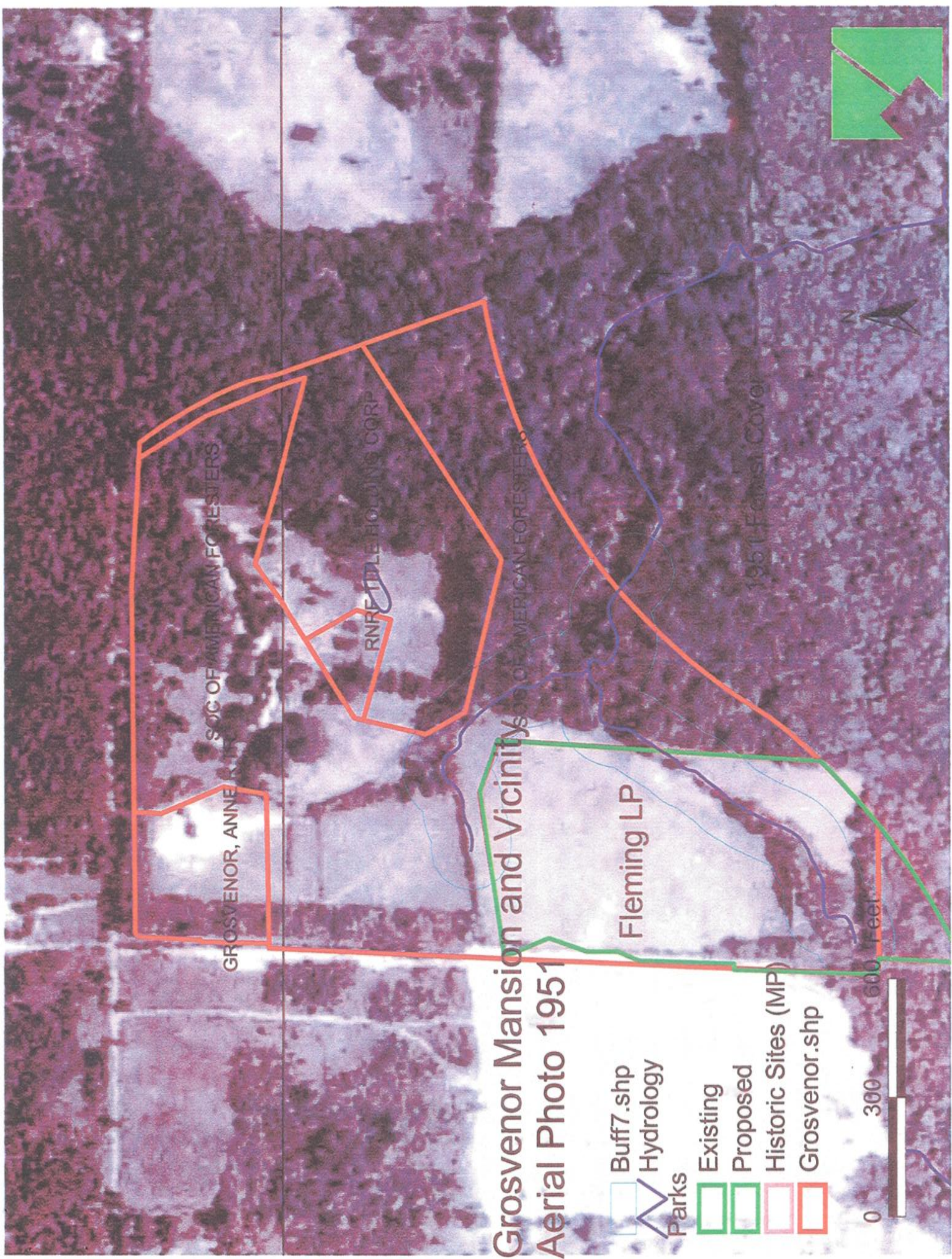
Is there a good reason the citizens of the county should not continue to have input, via the Historic Preservation Commission, as to how this estate may be best preserved when current and future occupants and owners wish to make changes in their own interests?

I hope you will share these thoughts and enclosures with the rest of the Planning Board charged with making this decision.

Sincerely,



Irene Elliott
10014 Fleming Ave.
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-530-8591



Grosvenor Mansion and Vicinity Aerial Photo 1951

- Buff7.shp
- Hydrology
- Existing
- Proposed
- Historic Sites (MP)
- Grosvenor.shp



GROSVENOR, ANNE R. TR.

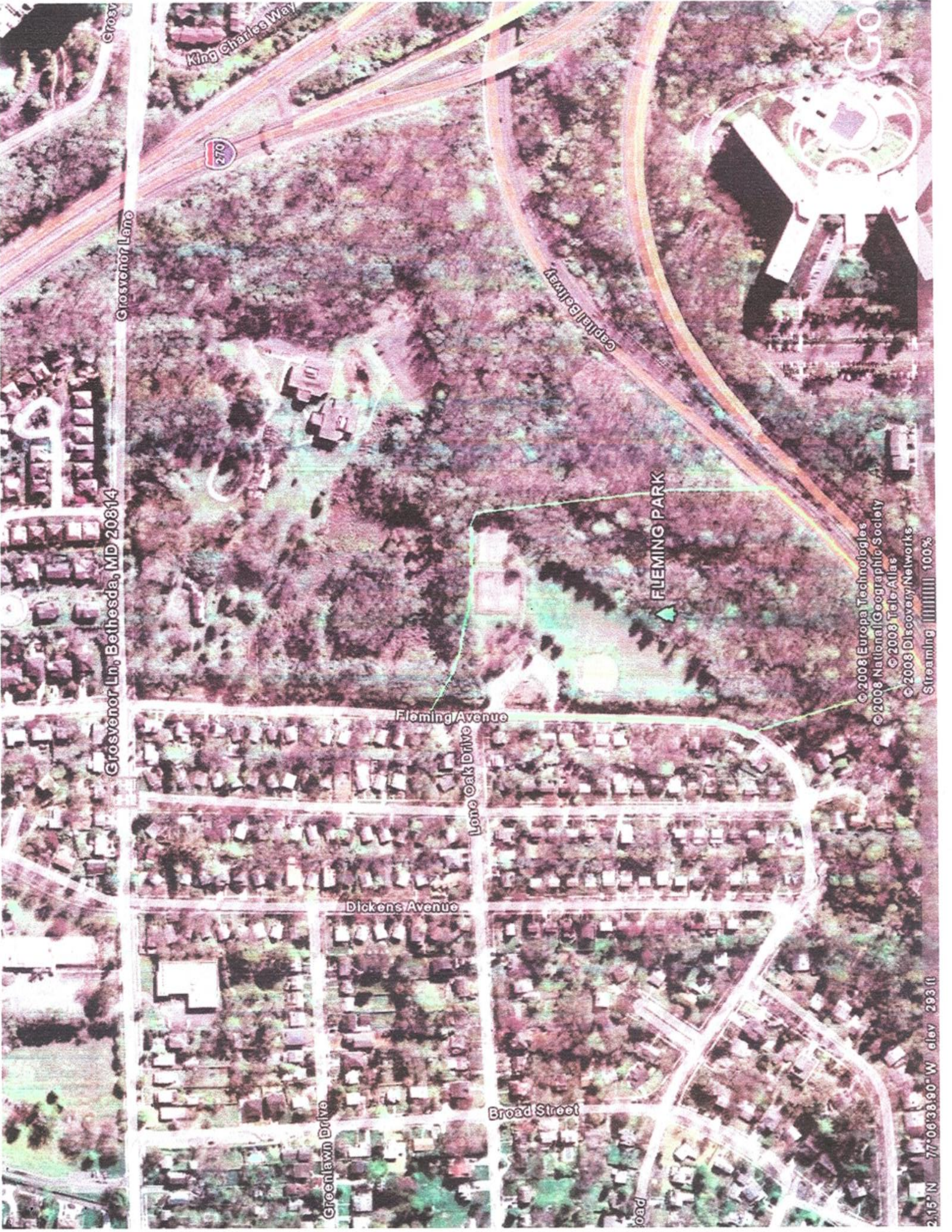
SOC OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

RNF LITTLE HOLDINGS CORP

SOC OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

Fleming LP

1951 Forest Cove



Grosvenor Ln, Bethesda, MD 20814

Grosvenor Lane

King Charles Way



Central Expressway

FLEMING PARK

Fleming Avenue

Lone Oak Drive

Dickens Avenue

Greenlawn Drive

Broad Street

© 2008 Europa Technologies
© 2008 National Geographic Society
© 2008 Tele Atlas
© 2008 Discovery Networks
Streaming 100%

2.15° N 77° 06' 38.90" W elev 293 ft

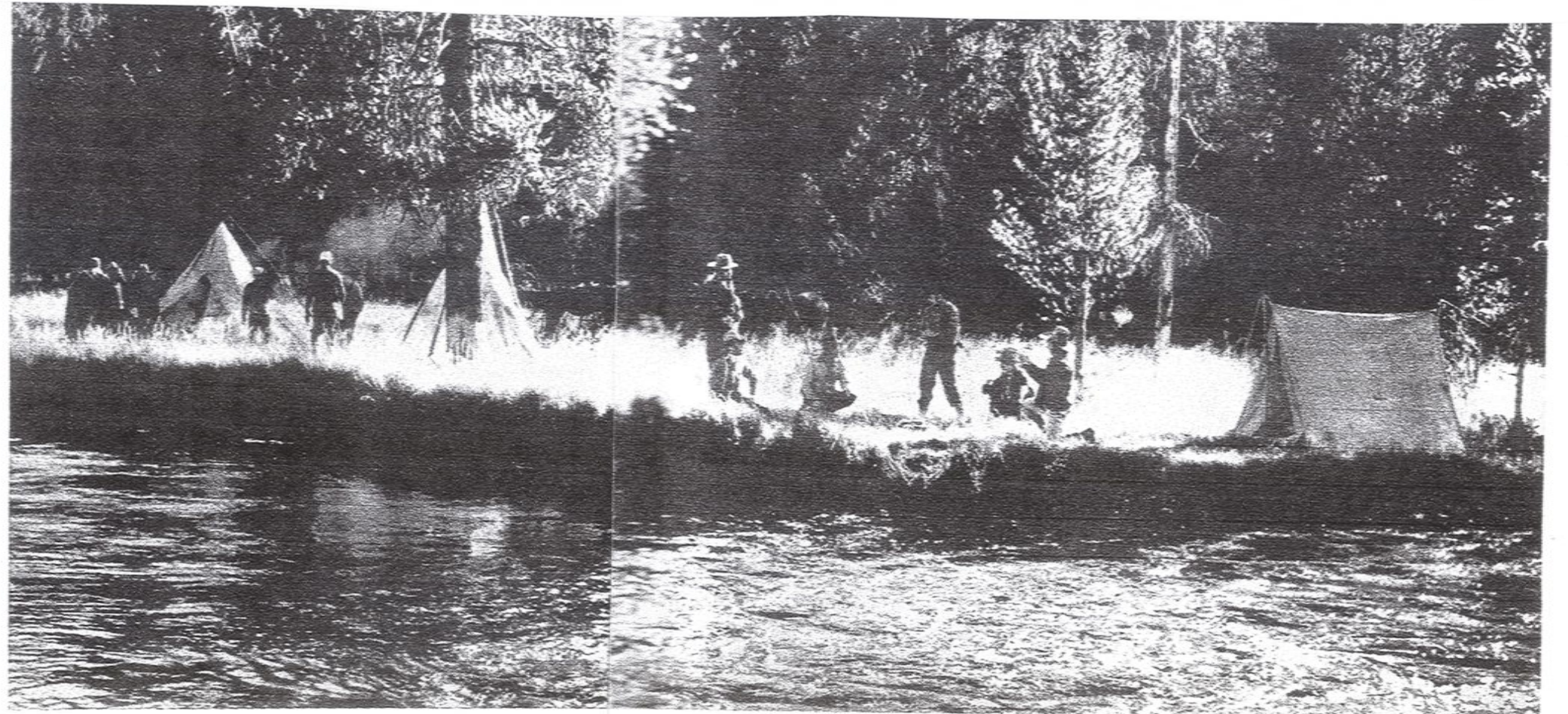
**Yellowstone campers
re-enact the drama that
gave birth to the park**

On September 19, 1870, 15 men pitched tents on this meadow after a month-long journey through the spectacular Yellowstone country.

Braving hostile Indians and riding through early snows, Gen. Henry D. Washburn's party had circled Yellowstone Lake, seen the roaring geysers, and explored the canyon and falls. This was a wonderland, they agreed, and spoke of staking private claims.

But Judge Cornelius Hedges urged that the area be preserved as a park. His companions, persuaded, later worked vigorously for the idea, despite jeers that greeted their reports. "Champion liar of the Northwest" one leader was called.

Their work bore fruit: in 1872 Congress created Yellowstone National Park, the Nation's first.



J. BAYLOR ROBERTS, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER

vigorously as they could. These men kept their word, and such was their prominence that Congress two years later established Yellowstone as the first national park in the world. I know of nobody today who seriously questions the wisdom of that Congressional decision. Further, each succeeding Congress and every administration since 1872 has strengthened the concept proclaimed around the Yellowstone campfire.

Curious visitors started coming to the first national park right away. Yellowstone became a huge success, and Congress created more parks. Sequoia, Yosemite, and Mount Rainier came into the new system of "pleasuring grounds," as they were first known, before the turn of the century. The year 1906 saw passage of the Antiquities Act. It permits Presidents to make national monuments of historically and scientifically interesting places by simple proclamation. This important law has given the Nation about half its National Park System. It was conceived originally to protect the Indian ruins of the Southwest from souvenir hunters.

The Park Service was created as a bureau of the Department of the Interior in 1916. Until that time Interior had been running the parks as a sort of extra chore. Most of the work fell to W. B. Acker, an assistant attorney for the

department. Working devotedly, but only part time, he could not please everybody. One of his critics was Stephen T. Mather of Chicago, possessor of a borax fortune. Mather wrote his old college friend Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, that he thought the department was doing a pretty poor job with the parks.

Retorted Lane: "If you don't like it, come and run the parks yourself." Mather accepted.

One of the first men he met in Washington was Gilbert Grosvenor, then Editor, later President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Geographic Society. Dr. Grosvenor enthusiastically supported Mather's plan for a specialized Park Service, helped write the legislation that created it, and guided the National Geographic Society to a friendship with the parks that is as firm today as it was in the beginning.

In 1915 Dr. Grosvenor went on a camping trip Mather arranged in California's Sierra Nevadas for some influential people he hoped would help sell his park ideas. Mather and Grosvenor, scorning tents, spread their blankets on the forest floor beneath a giant tree and talked probably half the night about the Park Service. One result of this trip was a contribution by the

INTRODUCTION

National Geographic Society to help the Park Service acquire this magnificent grove of ancient sequoias.

In 1958 The Society gave the American people Russell Cave in Alabama. Here the Smithsonian Institution excavated Indian homesites 9,000 years old. It is one of the few properties in the Park System that memorialize North American man from the time of his arrival here from Asia, more than 25,000 years ago, and the time he built villages in the Southwest, about the beginning of the Christian Era.

In 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt consolidated under our care a whole host of national monuments, military parks, memorials, and cemeteries previously administered by the War Department and the Department of Agriculture. Two years later Congress passed legislation authorizing the establishment of national historic sites, and 23 areas have been so designated by Secretaries of the Interior.

Among the responsibilities we assumed in the thirties was the park system of Washington, D. C. It contains 792 pieces of property, including the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, Rock Creek Park, parts of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and so many statues I've lost count. We have the White House on our books, too. We don't tell the First Lady how to run her household, of course, but we keep the gardens neat and the lawns mowed.

The Park Service looks after 24 million acres of land in 181 units scattered throughout the continental United States, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands. Yellowstone was the first park; Russell Cave is the newest. Katmai

30



GILBERT GROSVENOR



General Sherman: Sequoia's giant among giants

When California's Giant Forest was threatened by lumbering in 1915, Stephen Mather, then Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior, invited a group of eminent Americans to visit the grove. One of these was Gilbert Grosvenor, Editor of the *National Geographic*, who made this dramatic picture as 20 men, fingertip to fingertip, encircled General Sherman's 102-foot waist.

A picnic among the big trees saw Mr. Mather at head of table with Dr. Grosvenor on his left. The Society and some of its members later contributed \$100,000 to preserve 2,239 acres of *Sequoia gigantea*.

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DATE: 5/29/08
ITEM NO. 4
EXHIBIT NO. 9

Montgomery County Planning Board members,

My name is Dennis Calderone. With my wife and three children we live at 10006 Fleming Ave. Bethesda, MD., directly across the street of the Wild Acre property for the last 10 years. I am also a past board member of the Fleming Park Community Association. Before you is the proposal to designation the Gilbert H Grosvenor Manor house, Carriage House, Caretaker's Cottage, Outbuildings and environmental setting for inclusion on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation. I and every neighbor I have talked to and who has signed the petition all support this nomination.

The architectural and design merits as well as the historic and cultural significance of this house, surrounding buildings and property and the contribution of its original owner has been well documented. What I would like to emphasize and is supported by the residents of the neighborhood is the surrounding property. This was evidenced by the petition, letters and emails for legacy open space designation and for this historic preservation nomination. If we could turn back the hands of time to 1970 when the property was being considered for purchase by the county we would all be actively petitioning your support.

Over the last thirty plus years I have seen so many changes in Montgomery County. Old buildings have been torn down to make way for high rises and development. It seems every ounce of natural and wooded property is being leveled for new and denser housing. The original Grosvenor estate has been carved up bit by bit whether by 270 and 495, the Pooks Hill development and from 270 east to Rockville Pike.

I can't help but think about how Gilbert H Grosvenor who built this house, who was a National Geographic President; a board member of the Wildlife Conservation Society and National Wildflower Research Center; Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment; vice chairman of the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors; and former member of The President's Commission on Environmental Quality, would view the continued assault on his beloved property and all the animals that live there.

I'm reminded of the National Geographic President's note in the March 2008 magazine - "Suddenly everyone is going green, or so it seems. For many, it's a new concept, but at the National Geographic Society we've embraced values now considered green since our founding in 1888. We pay attention to all the ways, big and small, in which we can be responsible citizens of the planet. ...we must preserve our planet. Being green is not a trend. It is, perhaps the most important challenge of our time." Gilbert H Grosvenor and a long line of Grosvenors have been at the helm of the National Geographic. It is in this environment that the buildings of this estate were built. The historical significance is not just the building. Not to protect the surroundings of the home renders it vulnerable to the bit by bit dismantling of Gilbert Governors' legacy. Protecting only the building would be the antithesis of all that he stood and worked for. It is important to protect this heritage from plans for this property such as those currently under consideration which would have almost no benefit for the community or the county. These plans will result in the destruction of most of the woods to the north, east and west of the buildings, increased noise from the property and 270 & 495 because of the removal of the tree sound barrier, significant daily traffic jams, as well as having no tax or financial benefit since it will be a not for profit. I ask you to protect our heritage and environment for the benefit of the community and the people you represent.

It is in this light that I and all those who have written to you and signed the petition ask that the Manor House, Carriage House, Caretaker's Cottage and Outbuildings and environmental setting should be designated as for inclusion on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation and protected from alteration or destruction.

Thank you!

DATE: 5/29/08

ITEM NO. 4

EXHIBIT NO. 4

My name is Lisa Goenner. I live at 5715 Kingswood Court in Bethesda, and I'm privileged to speak here today on behalf of the Fleming Park Community Association. I want to begin by thanking the Planning Board for this opportunity to voice our neighborhood's support for the historic designation of the buildings and grounds that comprise Wild Acres.

I've lived in the immediate Grosvenor neighborhood for just five years, but I grew up not far from there, in the old Alta Vista neighborhood, and my memories of Wild Acres go all the way back to 1959. That summer before I turned five was when I got my first good look at the Grosvenor Mansion, on a rare day when a few of my siblings let me tag along while they went out exploring. Other than playing games and watching TV shows like "Sky King" or "Howdy Doody," exploring was mostly what we did for fun back then. I admit the 2-mile trek from our house almost did me in. We walked for what seemed like forever, along the trolley car path, across fields, through woods and along a creek before we finally got to where we were going. Our destination wasn't even the mansion—little kids don't care about stuff like that. No, we were headed for a pond my brother knew about—Grosvenor's Pond, as it happens—a pond that had real cattails and frogs. But what I remembered most clearly about that day was seeing the mansion at the top of the sloping hill. For years afterward I wondered what that magnificent house was, and *where* it was. I knew I hadn't dreamed it, but I could never place it. It wasn't until high school that I chanced on Roger Farquhar's book about Montgomery County's old houses, and in it there was a description and the location of a nearby mansion called Wild Acres. I actually had the nerve to go there and knock on the door of the house, and somewhat to my surprise I was invited in for an impromptu tour of the house and grounds. On the back lawn, my guide pointed out the pond, and when I looked back at the southern façade of the house from the bottom of that sloping hill, I suddenly realized where I was. That was the pond I'd visited so many years before, and that was house I had seen. The mansion was exactly the same as I'd remembered it.

One thing that struck me about that visit was that the house *was* the same, because so much of the Bethesda I'd known growing up had already disappeared. As kids, we never seemed to pay too much attention to fences and property lines when we were out exploring. Our familiar haunts included the trolley car path, of course, but also any of the nearby properties that seemed interesting. To us, they were fine for checking out, just as long as we didn't get caught. And there were a lot of really excellent places to explore back then: fine old houses, expansive

gardens with their fruit trees and grape arbors, overgrown woods, fields, creeks and pastures. There were small herds of Black Angus and sheep, flocks of chickens, even one place where you could find peacocks. In those same places today you will now find the YMCA, Heart House, The Podiatry Association, Georgetown Square, medical offices and housing developments—and of course, the Beltway, 270, and a multi-lane Old Georgetown Road in place of the curving 2-lane street we knew back in the 50's. Over the years I saw my neighborhood give way, bit by bit, to the relentless march of progress that radically changed the face of Bethesda.

All too few of those wonderful places remain, and it's no coincidence that many of them are now protected by historic designation. Some haven't changed that much. The Bethesda Community Store (better known as Brown's) is still there and open for business—management has changed but it still smells like Twinkies. Ayrlawn's silo is still around, too—although if I ever sneak in *there* again, I will know not to climb up into its attic and get stuck. Landon School's beautiful farmhouse, along with its barns and outbuildings, is still in a pastoral setting that recalls its former life; that's a view I appreciate daily from my campus office window.

Preservation has worked beautifully for some buildings, and others that have been protected are, unfortunately, not at all like they were to begin with. We're glad to have them but you can't help feeling sorry for them at the same time. There's the home of the Big Train, Walter Johnson; the house where he lived when he was pitching fast balls for the Washington Senators still sits on Old Georgetown Road—and I do mean *right* on the road: by the time it was given historic designation, the house had hardly any yard left, so it's a little like the pitcher's mound without the ballpark. Community Paint and Hardware is still there, but the last time I looked it had lost all of its down-home charm. If only there had been a way to preserve the hilarious Broadhurst brothers along with the store!

And then, of course, there is the Grosvenor Mansion, as yet unprotected. With its carriage house and the caretaker's cottage, the mansion still graces the lawns and woodlands of Wild Acres, and even what's left of the pond still attracts our neighborhood kids as a venue worthy of exploration. It is, as they say, ripe for the picking.

These places are the links to Bethesda's past as rural farmland, small-town community, and home to some of the great figures from years gone by. They bear testimony not just to the history of the *area*, but to the personal history of the people who grew up here and continue to make their homes here today.

Of all of those sites, though, the Grosvenor property is a standout. In spite of changes to the interior of the house, the mansion and its accompanying outbuildings and lawns are hardly different from that day when I first saw it nearly 50 years ago. Even the office buildings now standing on the property have failed to spoil the intrinsic charm and beauty of the mansion and its estate setting. There aren't too many properties in Montgomery County much less Bethesda itself that can make the same claim.

It's amazing, in a way, that the Grosvenor property is only now being considered for its historic value. It is, after all, a *grand dame* of estate houses in the County, with its charming architectural details and old-world craftsmanship defining even the carriage house and caretaker's cottage. What is perhaps even more amazing, and truly fortunate as you now consider them for historic preservation, is that after all these years the structures *and* their setting are still largely intact.

If this ripening appreciation for the architecture of Wild Acres seems especially timely, it's also matched by a growing admiration for Gilbert Grosvenor and the many and varied contributions he made, both as president of the National Geographic Society and editor-in-chief of its magazine.

I suspect that most people in this room have seen the classic movie "It's a Wonderful Life" at least once. There's a memorable scene in that film where a young George Bailey is working behind an ice cream counter, lecturing a customer about the exotic, faraway places where coconuts grow: the Fiji Islands, Tahiti, and the Coral Sea. "*I'm* going to be an explorer," George declares, producing his latest issue of the National Geographic Magazine—the year is supposed to be 1913—and then he brags with an air of exclusivity and great importance, "Why, *I've* been nominated to be a member of the National Geographic Society." By 1946, when that film was made, the National Geographic Magazine was already a cultural icon, and the "nomination to be a member" had become such a ubiquitous invitation to subscribe that the line was a guaranteed laugh. And it's still funny because the National Geographic is *still* everywhere you look.

Nobody throws those magazines away. They collect them, they store them for decades in bookcases and garages and in overflowing boxes in attics and basements. They might donate them, they might sell them—I bought one at a yard sale last weekend—but they don't toss them. It's as if the magazines are too good to throw out. National Geographics are always interesting,

no matter how old they are. They're a staple in homes across America and even in the computer age they remain the "go-to" source anytime your kid has to write a report on some arcane topic. You have a project on the habits and habitat of the duck-billed platypus, or on the Sherpa culture in mountainous Nepal? Not a problem. Somewhere in all of those magazines—just use the index to find out where—you'll discover what you're looking for. And you'll discover what you're *not* looking for too, which I think was the whole point of the thing to begin with.

Gilbert Grosvenor's leadership of the National Geographic had a lot to do with helping people to see the value in their surroundings and to recognize that there *are* some things that are too good to throw away. The National Geographic wasn't just a phenomenal publishing success story; it was Grosvenor's vehicle for getting to that explorer in each one of us. And in the process, the National Geographic became a standard for pioneering photojournalism, a celebration of cultural diversity and scientific discovery; a springboard for daring expeditions around the world. Gilbert Grosvenor's National Geographic showed us what was out there. And like the maps that often came with his magazine, Grosvenor showed us the way to safeguard those natural treasures, playing a pivotal role in the creation of national parks and the preservation of our global environment for future generations. Grosvenor's impact was immediate, and his legacy has proven to be a lasting one.

Today, I ask the Planning Board members to have the same immediate impact by creating a lasting legacy on behalf of Montgomery County. Your actions now to protect the Grosvenor mansion, its carriage house, caretaker's cottage, and the setting of all three will serve as testimony that Gilbert Grosvenor's message has not been lost on us, that some things *are* worth preserving. I urge you to preserve the architecture and the setting as recommended by the staff, to honor Grosvenor's many accomplishments and contributions, and to *keep intact* this important piece of our community's history. I urge you fully to support the nomination of Wild Acres for historic designation.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Fleming Park Community Association.

Lisa Goenner
5715 Kingswood Court
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-571-5245

**Testimony of Ann Bowker for the Wildwood Manor Citizens Association,
Before the Montgomery County Planning Board, May 29, 2008,
Regarding Nomination of Wild Acres to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation**

COMMUNITY EXHIBIT
RECEIVED BY MCPB
DATE: 5/29/08
ITEM NO. 4
EXHIBIT NO. 5

My name is Ann Bowker, and I am a member of the board of the Wildwood Manor Citizens Association. Our president is unable to attend this meeting, and I am speaking for her, on behalf of our association, which represents 600 homes located just north and northwest of Wild Acres.

The Wildwood Manor Citizens Association strongly supports the nomination of Wild Acres Gilbert Grosvenor's estate on Grosvenor Lane in Bethesda, to Montgomery County's Master Plan for Historic Preservation, including:

- **the mansion, the carriage house/garage, and the caretaker's house, and**
- **the entire environmental setting shown in the April 16 and May 22, 2008, Maryland – National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff memorandums recommending designation of Wild Acres on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.**

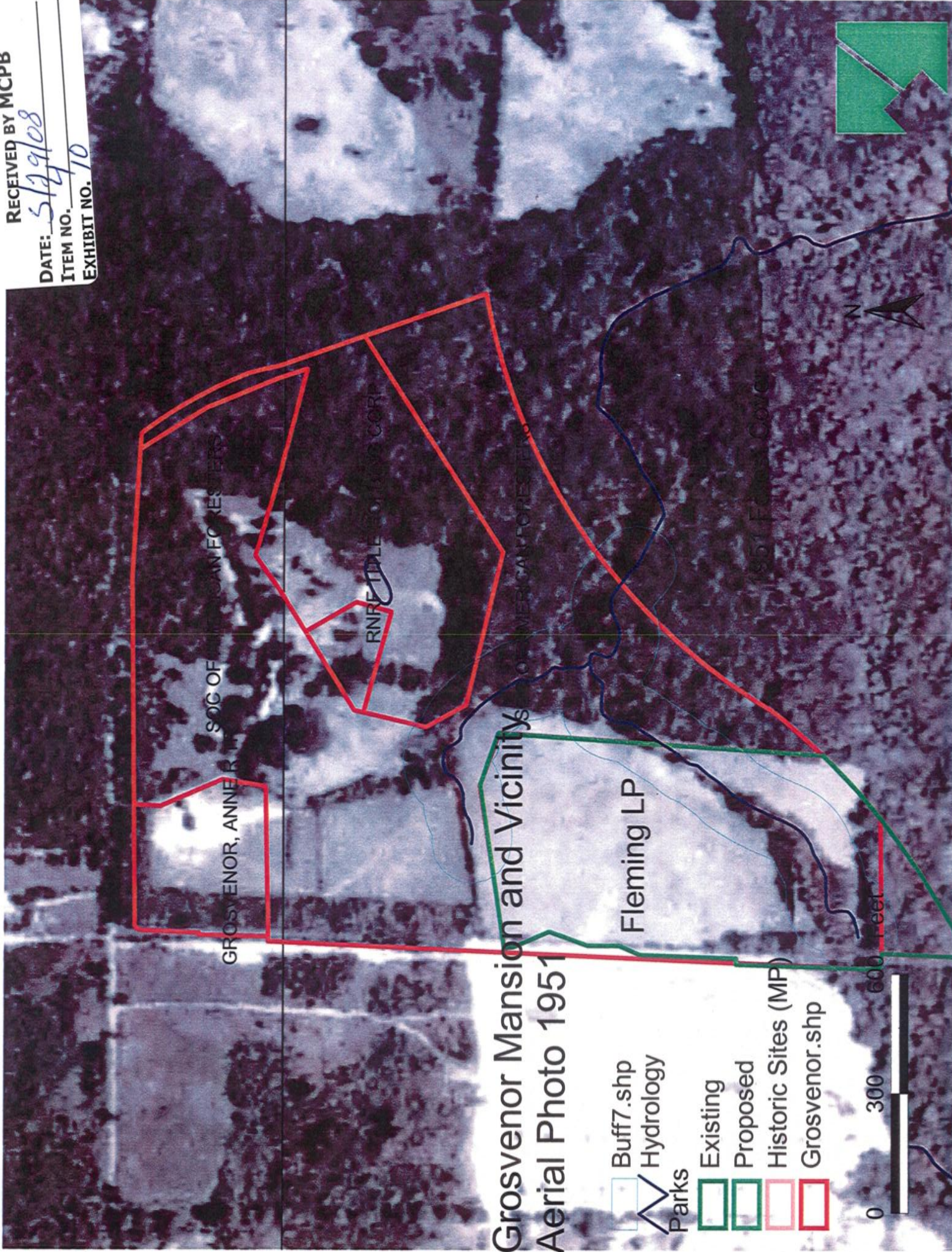
Wild Acres clearly merits this designation. M-NCPPC staff and the Historic Preservation Commission found that Wild Acres meets six criteria for designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and has historical significance, architectural significance, and environmental setting and landscape significance. The Historic Preservation Commission unanimously voted to support designation of Wild Acres on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, on April 23, 2008. In addition, in 2000, the Maryland Historical Trust found that Wild Acres is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Wild Acres is a significant example of the country estates built in Montgomery County in the early 20th century by wealthy Washingtonians. It was the estate of Gilbert Grosvenor of the National Geographic Society, a significant historical figure both regionally and nationally, and it also is associated with other significant people of his time, such as Alexander Graham Bell, his father-in-law. The three buildings and much of their former environmental setting still survive and still evoke the country mansion era of the early 20th century.

The three buildings and their environmental setting are integral parts of Wild Acres. They contribute to the historic, architectural, and aesthetic character and significance of the property and are essential to its context as a country estate. These buildings and their environmental setting all qualify for designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. They are a significant part of Montgomery County's historical, architectural, cultural, and environmental heritage. They should be preserved in a way that conveys the previous use of the property as a country estate and retains the character of the property. It is important to preserve these structures and an environmental setting appropriate to their previous use – not just the mansion and a little grass around it.

Wild Acres' historic structures, beautiful setting, and association with the Grosvenor family are an important and cherished part of our neighborhood and its character. Designating the three structures and their environmental setting on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation will help to assure that Gilbert Grosvenor's estate will not be reduced to a mansion left out of context – or to nothing but the Grosvenor name on a street, a metro station, and apartment and housing developments.

COMMUNITY EXHIBIT
RECEIVED BY MCPB
DATE: 5/29/08
ITEM NO. _____
EXHIBIT NO. 10



Grosvenor Mansion and Vicinity Aerial Photo 1951

- Buff7.shp
- Hydrology
- Parks
- Existing
- Proposed
- Historic Sites (MP)
- Grosvenor.shp

0 300 600 Feet



30-15

WILD ACRES

A Self-Guided Tour

COMMUNITY EXHIBIT
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Society of American Foresters

Representing the Forestry Profession in America
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WELCOME TO THE NATIONAL OFFICE OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS... We hope you will spend some time here and tour the two SAF buildings at Wild Acres. The staff here will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the Society.

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impressive
FIRST FT
PART

History of the Site

"Wild Acres" is a former land-grant site. It represents parts of "Leeke Forest" and "Dann", recorded by the Lord Proprietor of Maryland in the late 1600's. A colonial hewn-stone boundary marker remains intact in the woods; carved initials on the three-foot stone refer to an early owner of the property, Andrew S. Heugh, prominent Georgetown tobacco merchant. He developed a country place here in the 18th century. (Note: Heugh's holdings were described on 1783 tax rolls as "200 acres of cleared land with good soil, a few acres in meadow, one good dwelling house, kitchen, barn, and quarters, etc.") During the Civil War, the John Wilson family occupied the property, which was, by then, a typical Maryland farm - with fields, orchards, barns, and a clapboard farmhouse set in a forest clearing. Just to the east ran one of the country's oldest toll roads, now known as Rockville Pike (Wisconsin Avenue). Confederate Jeb Stuart led a raid on a Yankee wagon train as it moved up the pike, passing the farm.

In 1890, a new form of transportation was added when trolley car tracks were laid along the property's western boundary. A transformer station was built nearby and, for the next four decades, clocks were set by the sound of trolley's approaching through the woods.

In 1913, Gilbert Grosvenor, editor of the *National Geographic*, purchased the property, christening it "Wild Acres". Gilbert Grosvenor's wife, Elsie May Bell, was the daughter of Alexander Graham Bell. Mrs. Grosvenor was an early advocate of women's rights. Through the years, she was also active in the National Geographic Society, contributing articles and proofing miles of galley.

Initially, Wild Acres was the Grosvenor summer home. The original farmhouse had no plumbing, no running water, and no heat. As the Grosvenor family grew, the house became too small and, in 1928, was replaced by the present Tudor mansion, which served as the year-round home of the Grosvenor family until 1966, when Gilbert died. Elsie Grosvenor had died two years earlier.

When occupied by the Grosvenors, the mansion had 14 bedrooms, 8 baths, and 3 libraries. Elsie Grosvenor selected the native stone for its pinkish tones, and slate for the roof was shipped from England. The Grosvenor home was the scene of frequent social functions attended by many world-famous personalities. During the late 1960's SAF began meeting with other professional societies to explore ideas for a consortium of renewable natural resources organizations. A center to house national headquarters for member societies was envisioned. In 1970, SAF learned that an anonymous donor would match funds raised for SAF national headquarters, to be named for Gifford Pinchot. SAF voted to accept the gift. Gordon D. Fox was appointed Chair of the Land and Building Committee and Charles A. Connaughton became chair of fundraising. Gordon Fox approached his friend, Tom Gill¹, to serve on the Search Committee. Gill refused, but voiced his strong support for the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation (RNRF) idea, and stated he would follow the project with interest. In January 1972, SAF joined with other professional societies to form RNRF. Fundraising and land search were progressing that year when Tom Gill died suddenly and his identity as the donor of a \$500,000 gift to SAF was revealed. With his bequest, Gill assured a fitting memorial for SAF's founding forester, Gifford Pinchot.

Wild Acres was purchased from the Grosvenor estate in 1973 and, in 1974, SAF undertook major remodeling of the interior of the building. The exterior remained virtually unchanged; the Grosvenor Coat of Arms is still in place over the entrance. The architect for SAF remodeling, Rurik Ekstrom, was chosen for his work with wood. Paneling in the main hall was a gift of the California Redwood Association. The original oak floors were refinished. Extensive and innovative uses of natural wood were made possible by donations from universities, timber associations, and private industry. Plaques in each paneled area mark the names of the donors and types

¹ Gill was a SAF Fellow, a renowned tropical forester, and a writer of popular adventure novels. Many of his works were made into films.

of wood. The new headquarters, dedicated on September 30, 1975 as the Gifford Pinchot Forestry Building, are impressive evidence of the growth, prestige, and stability of professional forestry in America.

FIRST FLOOR: To the right of the front entrance is the Tom Gill Conference Room. In this room, cypress paneling conceals bookshelves which hold a small SAF library; a portrait of Tom Gill hangs over the fireplace; and French doors open onto a wrap-around veranda. A reception area has been formed from part of the original living room. Here a glass case contains Gill's first editions and memorabilia. The room adjoining the reception area also has French doors opening onto the veranda. A portrait of Gifford Pinchot hangs over an antique marble mantle, and the walls are lined with photographs of the other SAF Presidents and Executive Vice Presidents. This room was dedicated to Charles A. Connaughton on July 27, 1990, at the occasion of our 1990 SAF National Convention in Washington, DC. The desk, located just outside the Connaughton Room in the hallway near the front entrance, was crafted from an antique sea chest, and belonged to Tom Gill.

Doors to the left lead into the original dining room, now divided into offices and paneled in sycamore and white oak. This area is now occupied by our Finance and Administration offices. A sculptured marble mantle and another bay window are reminders of the days when the Grosvenors held dinner parties for such guests as Ann and Charles Lindbergh and William Howard Taft, a cousin of Gilbert Grosvenor (Taft was the U.S. president who dismissed Pinchot as Chief Forester). In the hallway next to this area is an ornate safe, moved to Wild Acres from the home of Alexander Graham Bell.

SECOND FLOOR: On the second floor landing, a six-foot cross section of a giant sequoia is mounted on the wall. Forestry students have made a ring count, placing its age at 1,500 years.

To the right (the west wing) of the landing is the former Grosvenor master suite, which now houses the Executive Offices, the Science and Education Department, and the Meetings and Conventions Department. The end room, with doors to a balcony on the south and a porch on the west, has exposed beams of Douglas-fir, skylights in a ceiling of Engelmann spruce, and cherry wall paneling. This is the office of the SAF Executive Vice President.

The east wing houses the Forest Policy Department and the Communications and Member Services Department, and is paneled in maple, birch, walnut, and pecan.

THIRD FLOOR: The third floor, originally the Grosvenor's nursery, is now divided into offices which are currently occupied by the International Society of Tropical Foresters (ISTF). This floor boasts the most colorful of the building's nine fireplaces – it is faced with ceramic tiles depicting whimsical nursery rhyme animals.

Every old house should have a ghost, and it is said – though not corroborated – that the third floor harbors a friendly spirit.

THE CARRIAGE HOUSE . . . AND BEYOND: The carriage house (really built as a four-car garage), next to the Pinchot building, houses our Publications Department and Adelman Travel Systems.

Beyond the carriage house are the two buildings of the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation. A 1920's clapboard barn sits back in the woods. A concrete silo, with metal dome, bears the date 1943 (Wild Acres was a working farm up through World War II). Also, near the driveway entrance is the wood-shingled caretaker's cottage.

Carol J. McKernon

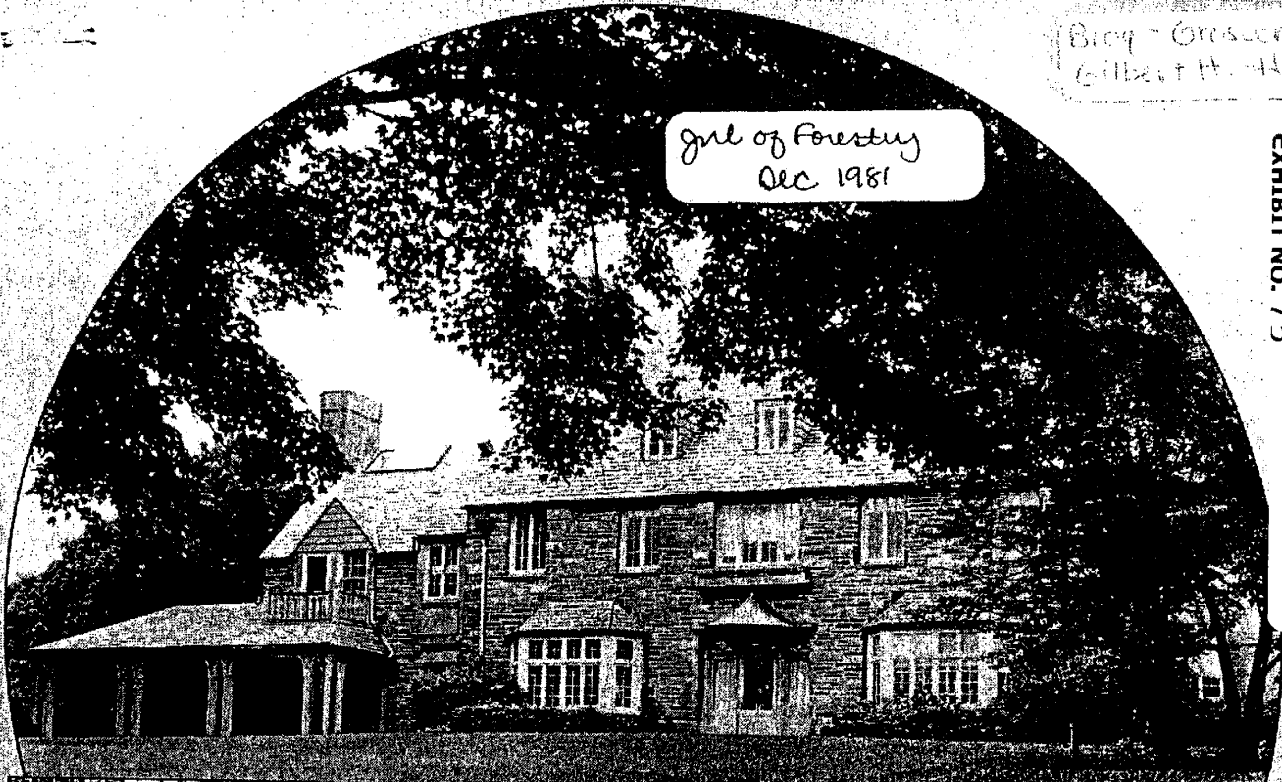
Front page illustration of the Gifford Pinchot Building was sketched by artist, M. Lederman, 1982.

Map of tree species on SAF grounds was an Eagle Scout project of Scott West Troop 1145, Springfield, Virginia, 1987. Dr. Bryan Clark, Fellow-SAF, dendrologist; James Ohman, artist; financial assistance, National Capital SAF.

Big - Grosvenor,
Gilbert H. Woods

Jul of Forestry
Dec 1981

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Historic Wild Acres

Barry Walden Walsh



The first view of Wild Acres is from the woods. Native forest surrounds and secludes the office complex developing on the 35-acre site. The Renewable Natural Resources Foundation (RNRF) makes a conservation statement by locating its RNR Center in this sylvan setting just outside the nation's capital. A driveway winds through stands of white oak and yellow-poplar mixed with hickory, beech, elm, maple, and pine. Understory dogwood, red-bud, and shrub honeysuckle support a tangle of wild grape and rose. Past a wood-shingled caretaker's cottage, the drive forks, leading on the left to the new RNR building, and on the right to the Gifford Pinchot Forestry Building, national headquarters for the Society of American Foresters. The Pinchot Building appears at the top of a rise, an English country manor house framed by the trees. The drive circles in front of the

building across rolling lawns which extend to the edge of the woods. A pastoral serenity lingers about the property today, along with a feeling of place and of history. Wild Acres is a former land-grant site. It represents parts of "Leeke Forest" and "Dann" recorded by the Lord Proprietor of Maryland in the late 1600s. A colonial hewn-stone

boundary marker remains intact in the woods. Carved initials on the three-foot stone refer to an early owner of the property: Andrew S. Heugh, prominent Georgetown tobacco merchant. He developed a country place here in the 18th century. During the Civil War, the John Wilson family occupied the property which was, by then, a typical Maryland farm with orchards, fields, barns, and clapboard farmhouse set in a forest clearing. Just to the east ran one of the country's oldest toll roads. Confederate Jeb Stuart led a raid on a Yankee wagon train as it moved up the pike passing the farm. In 1890, a new form of transportation was added when trolley car tracks were laid along the property's western boundary. A transformer station was built nearby and for the next four decades, clocks were set by the sound of trolleys approaching through the woods.

Top (left): The colonial boundary marker at Wild Acres. The initials identify Andrew S. Heugh whose holdings were described on 1783 tax rolls as "200 acres of cleared land with good soil, a few acres in meadow, one good dwelling house, kitchen, barn, and quarters, etc." (Right): The Grosvenor family crest over the entrance doors of the Pinchot Building. Grosvenor means "great hunter", and hunting dogs figure in the heraldry. The Latin inscription translates "Deeds not words characterize the noble". (SAF photos.)

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Gilbert Hovey Grosvenor is pictured here in 1915 on a mission to save the giant sequoias. The National Geographic Society contributed funds that helped to establish Sequoia National Park. The redwood section on display in the Pinchot Building is especially fitting in the former home of Grosvenor, the conservationist.



Grosvenor Years

In the early 1900s, Gilbert H. Grosvenor, editor of the *National Geographic* magazine, often took his family on country outings, riding the trolleys from Washington, D.C. In 1913, he purchased the "Leeke Forest" farm by the trolley tracks, christening it Wild Acres. He also named Grosvenor Lane by sticking up signs at either end as part of his campaign to have the county pave the road, then noted for one dimension—a foot deep in mud.

Melville Bell Grosvenor, Gilbert's son, in a personal interview, fondly recalled the trolley years. He was eleven when his family purchased Wild Acres. It was strictly a summer place then, for the old farmhouse had no plumbing, no running water, and no heat. While school was in session, Gilbert would line up his children and march them out to the trolley tracks where cars made a special Grosvenor stop, and the red-moustachioed conductor became a family favorite. The trolley descended Wisconsin Avenue, the children debarked at their respective schools, and Gilbert proceeded on to town.

In a foreword to the book *Song and Garden Birds of North America* (National Geographic Society, 1964), Melville Grosvenor reminisces:



A 19th century farmhouse originally stood directly west of the Pinchot Building. The Grosvenors used it as a summer house until they replaced it with a permanent residence.



Photo provided by Mabel Grosvenor

I'll never forget the thrill of first seeing and hearing the birds at Wild Acres. . . . My father would take us children on bird walks. We'd stand silently in the woods and listen to a song cascading from the treetops, then move about until he could spot the singer with binoculars. He'd show the bird to us and describe its habits, and we'd try to remember the song. We were eager to have birds nest near the house, so we put out nesting material and fresh water. . . . Wren houses were easy to make from shingles, and my father offered 25 cents for each family they attracted. I put them up everywhere. Then I noticed that our martin apartment house lured martins by the dozen. If I could make one like that for wrens, I'd be rich. So I built one to accommodate 18 families—four dollars and fifty cents' worth. The trouble was, only one family moved in. That was how I learned the difference between colonial nesters like martins and privacy-loving wrens.

(One of Melville Grosvenor's standard wren houses remains in place today at Wild Acres, attached to the northeast corner of the Pinchot Building.)

The Grosvenors had such success attracting birds that the U.S. Biological Survey (since 1940, the Fish and Wildlife Service) suggested a bird census. Melville helped point out nests to Dr. Wells Cooke during the week of June 15 through June 21, 1915. On a single acre adjoining the farmhouse, 59 pairs of birds with young or eggs in the nest were

counted—the highest number of land birds inhabiting one acre that had been reported to the Department of Agriculture or to the Audubon Society. Gilbert Grosvenor detailed the count in an article for *Bird-Lore* (predecessor of *Audubon* magazine). There were flickers, bluebirds, yellow warblers, orchard orioles, catbirds, song sparrows, chipping sparrows, phoebes, house wrens, robins, kingbirds, and martins. Ornithologists consider it a remarkable record to this day.

Elsie Grosvenor, Gilbert's wife, also wrote about the birds at Wild Acres. (Several of her pamphlets are preserved in the cornerstone to the right of the Pinchot Building entrance doors.)

As the Grosvenor family grew, the farmhouse received various additions, but finally in 1927, work began on a year-round residence. The old house was replaced by a Tudor mansion which served as the center of Grosvenor family activities until 1966 when Gilbert died. Elsie Grosvenor died two years earlier.

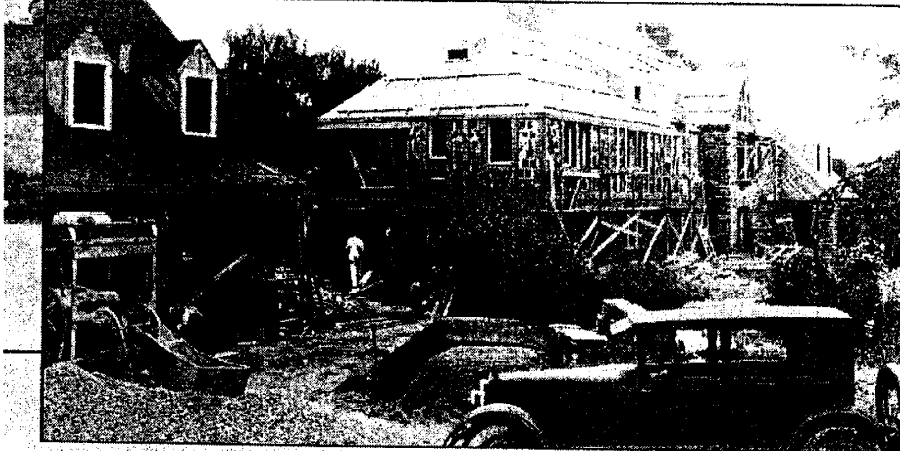
Wild Acres is described in *Old Homes and History of Montgomery County, Maryland* (R.B. Farquhar, 1962) and in *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County, Maryland* (Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1976). The statement of significance in the *Atlas* mentions the architecture of the house, the prominence of the Grosvenors, and



The Tudor-inspired mansion now serving as SAF national headquarters was constructed at Wild Acres beginning in 1927. Arthur B. Heaton was architect with Skinker and Garrett, builders. Elsie Grosvenor hand-selected the native stone for its pinkish tones. Slate for the roof was shipped from England.



Elsie May Bell Grosvenor, daughter of Alexander Graham Bell and wife of Gilbert H. Grosvenor, was an early advocate of women's rights. She had the words "to obey" omitted from her wedding vows in 1900 and rode with her little daughters in the 1913 suffrage parade. Through the years, she remained active in the National Geographic Society contributing articles and proofing miles of galley. She and Gilbert traveled the world gathering stories for their magazine and earning the title "Mr. and Mrs. Geography."



their distinguished guests. The listing includes this description:

The large Tudor-influenced estate house was built in two distinctive sections. The west section is constructed of uncoursed rubble-stone, quarried from the nearby River Road quarry. The east section is constructed of brick. The second level has wattle and daub designs applied to clay block walls. There are six-over-six double-hung windows arranged as singles, pairs, and triples. A second-level bay window is above the south doors. There is a gabled roof above the west section and a hipped roof above the east section, covered by slate tiles. The mansion had 14 bedrooms, 8 baths, 3 libraries, and was the scene of frequent social functions attended by many world-famous personalities.

This is the house that stands today preserved and occupied by the Society of American Foresters.

Gifford Pinchot Forestry Building

The story of how the Grosvenor home came to be the Gifford Pinchot Forestry Building is full of twists and turns. In the late 1960s, SAF began meeting with other professional societies to explore ideas for a consortium of experts in renewable natural resources. A center to house national headquarters for member societies was envisioned.

In 1970, word was received by SAF that an anonymous donor would match funds raised for a SAF national headquarters to be named for

Gifford Pinchot. SAF voted to accept the gift and Hardin R. Glascock, Jr., appointed Gordon D. Fox chairman of the land and building committee and Charles A. Connaughton fund-raising chairman. Fox recalls approaching his friend Tom Gill to serve on the search committee. Gill refused, but voiced his strong support for the RNRFF idea and stated that he would follow the project with interest. In January 1972, SAF joined with other professional societies to form RNRFF. Fund-raising and land search were progressing that year when Tom Gill died suddenly and his identity as the donor of a \$500,000 gift to SAF was revealed.

(Tom Gill was a SAF Fellow, a renowned tropical forester, and a writer of popular adventure novels. Several of his works were made into films. He had taken his forestry degree at Yale when Pinchot was guest lecturer and summer school was held at Pinchot's Grey Towers home in Milford, Pennsylvania. Pinchot, Chief Forester and father of the national forests, and Gill, formulator of the UN Forestry Division, remained associates throughout their Washington years.) With his bequest, Gill assured a fitting memorial for SAF's founding forester.

In 1973, Fox learned that the Grosvenor heirs were offering Wild Acres for sale. SAF proceeded to assist RNRFF with the purchase of the property at a cost of \$1.23 million.

At first, preservation of the mansion was not a sure thing. Best use of the property was debated, but in 1974, SAF voted to occupy the mansion and undertook a major remodeling project for the interior at a cost of \$440,000. The exterior remained virtually unchanged, and the Grosvenor coat of arms in stone is still in place over the entrance doors. *(For details on RNRFF and the remodeling of the Pinchot Building, see Journal of Forestry, August 1975 and October 1978.)*

A Tour of the Pinchot Building

The architect for SAF remodeling, Rurik Ekstrom, was chosen for his work with wood. He discussed his philosophy:

This lovely old building is definitely a renewable resource . . . Upon entrance, the visitor, coming into a low hallway, with a view through the building into a woodland behind, is surrounded by redwood—selected as a symbol of American woods in beauty, strength, and integrity. We used it on the ceilings and walls. The experience on entering the building is to pass through this low space into high soaring space, that reaches all the way to the roof and to the sky beyond . . . Notice that soft woods are used for accoustical material in the ceilings. At Wild Acres, we wanted to explore nontraditional uses of wood.

Paneling in the main hall is a gift of the California Redwood Association and original oak floors have been refinished, setting the mood

A lawn party, photographed near the piazza in 1929, had among the guests William Howard Taft, a cousin of Gilbert Grosvenor. Taft was the U.S. president who dismissed Pinchot as Chief Forester.



Elsie Grosvenor is shown in her Wild Acres library (now the Gill Conference Room). Note the teak archway that came from her father's home. Alexander Graham Bell was president of the National Geographic Society back in 1899 when the group's obscure technical journal needed an editor. He offered the job to a friend's son, fresh out of Amherst College. So began Gilbert Grosvenor's transformation of the magazine and courtship of Elsie.

for a blend of contemporary and antique throughout the complex. Extensive and innovative uses of natural wood, at every turn, represent donations from universities, timber associations, and private industry.

On the right is the Tom Gill Conference Center. A reception area has been formed from part of the original living room. Here a glass case contains Gill first editions and memorabilia. A portrait of Gill hangs over the fireplace in the adjoining conference room. In this spacious and popular room, cypress paneling conceals bookshelves which hold a small SAF library. French doors open on each length of the room to a wrap-around piazza (a detail the Grosvenors carried over from the old farmhouse for the cooling effect).

The Presidents' Room also adjoins the reception area. A bay window looks out over lawns sloping to a woodland pond and, again, French doors open to the piazza. This comfortable room with handsome black walnut paneling held RNRF offices before the new building was completed. Now it serves SAF presidents and functions as part of the Tom Gill Conference Center. A portrait of Gifford Pinchot hangs over an antique marble mantle and the walls are lined with photographs of the other SAF presidents.

(Over the years, Pinchot had been an occasional guest at Wild Acres. He was acquainted with Gilbert Grosvenor through the Cosmos Club. It was at this Washington, D.C.,

gentlemen's club that Grosvenor's father-in-law, Alexander Graham Bell, helped to found the National Geographic Society back in 1880. Carl Schenck in *The Birth of Forestry in America* (Forest History Society, 1974) recalled early SAF functions held at Bell's Washington home. Bell's house was razed about the time the Grosvenors were building the manor house, and two ornate safes were moved to Wild Acres.) They are in use today in the Pinchot Building.

In the foyer, outside the Presidents' Room, is a reception area with a desk which belonged to Tom Gill. It was crafted from an antique sea chest. Doors lead to the lawn, and on the left, to the original dining room, now divided into offices paneled in sycamore and white oak. A sculptured marble mantle and another bay window are reminders of the days when the Grosvenors held dinner parties here for such guests as Ann and Charles Lindbergh in 1933. Beyond the dining room were, then, the butler's pantry, kitchen, servants' dining room, laundry, and porch—now remodeled as offices. A back stairway with winding banister is still in use.

From the front hall, the main stairs ascend to a landing with exposed redwood beams and a skylight added during SAF remodeling. A large bay window overlooks the lawn and Japanese cherry trees planted by David Fairchild, plant explorer and director of the National Arboretum.

How did the man responsible for the cherry trees around the Tidal Basin in the capital come to plant trees at Wild Acres? In 1903, Fairchild was introduced to his future wife, Marian Bell, by her brother-in-law, the young editor, "Bert" Grosvenor.

On the second floor landing, a six-foot cross section of a giant sequoia is mounted on the wall. Forestry students have made a ring count placing its age at 1,500 years.

To the right of the landing, the SAF executive suite occupies the former Grosvenor master suite. The end room, with doors to a balcony on the south and a screened porch on the west, was Elsie Grosvenor's. Dramatic remodeling with exposed beams of Douglas-fir, skylights in a ceiling of Engelmann spruce, and cherry wall paneling provides a distinguished office for the SAF executive vice president. The office is reached through a reception area which once served as the Grosvenor's morning room. Here a corner fireplace backs to another in the room which was Gilbert Grosvenor's private study. This area is now divided into three offices paneled in aspen and maple.

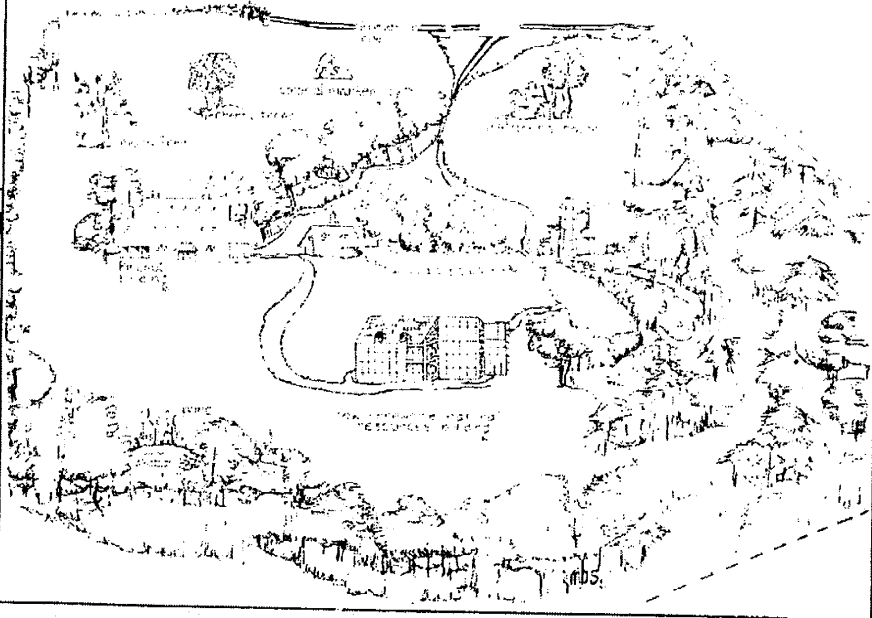
The east wing was originally the Grosvenor girls' wing. (By the time the house was built, Melville Grosvenor had married. He and his young family stayed for a while in the guest apartment over the carriage house. The Melville Grosvenors reside today in a colonial brick house, built in the 1950s, just

The Grosvenor's fiftieth wedding anniversary was celebrated at Wild Acres in 1950 with 500 guests attending. Pictured here are Gilbert and Elsie with their children, from left: Mrs. Lilian Jones, Melville Bell Grosvenor, Mrs. Carol Myers, Dr. Mabel Grosvenor, Mrs. Gertrude Gayley, and Mrs. Gloria Ofjedal.



(Except where noted, photographs are courtesy of the National Geographic Society.)

Map of the RNR Center.



to the west of the RNR Center. The east wing of the mansion was planned with bedrooms for the Grosvenor daughters, a guest room called the "Blue Room," a porch, and several servants' rooms. Carol Grosvenor Myers recalls wanting to do her room in pastels. Her father drew the line, though, when she requested paint for the solid mahogany doors which had come from the ancestral Grosvenor home, the Asa Waters house in Milbury, Massachusetts. A number of these doors, several colonial mantles, and carved cornerpieces from door and window frames were returned to Milbury at the time of the SAF remodeling—the Waters' house is now a museum and headquarters for the local historical society.) A few of the colonial carved cornerpieces can still be admired on windows in the Pinchot Building. Today, the east wing contains five offices paneled in maple, birch, and pecan, a second conference room with walnut paneling, and a reading porch.

The Grosvenors arranged the third floor as a children's apartment. (Gloria Grosvenor married a Norwegian diplomat. Her wedding reception at Wild Acres was attended by the crown princess of Norway who lived at a neighboring estate during World War II. Gloria traveled extensively. On visits to Wild Acres, her children occupied the third floor, where they had their own kitchen and playroom.) Now divided into offices, this floor boasts the

most colorful of the building's nine fireplaces. It is faced with ceramic tiles depicting whimsical animals including a masterful Puss In Boots. Every old house should have a ghost, and it is said, though not corroborated, that the third floor harbors a friendly spirit.

RNR Buildings and Grounds

The carriage house (really built as a four-car garage), next to the Pinchot Building, has also been remodeled. Double garage doors remain but, except for one entry door, are now fixed in place. Inside, a tiled foyer leads to six offices on the first floor, and by way of a spiral stairway, to four offices on the second. Outside stairs also lead to the second floor where a corner fireplace and dormer windows provide architectural interest. At the peak of the slate roof, a functioning cupola was recently discovered by resident raccoons as an entryway to the attic. SAF expanded to these offices when the former tenant, the American Fisheries Society, moved to the new building.

Beyond the carriage house and parking areas, a 1920s clapboard barn sits back in the woods. A con-

crete silo with metal dome bears the date 1943. Wild Acres was a working farm up through World War II. Cows were pastured in fields out beyond the pond. Today this area is a county playground just visible through winter trees.

The new two-story RNR building, adjacent to the carriage house and Pinchot Building, continues native oak, slate, and brick in a contemporary design. (For details on the new building, see the *Journal of Forestry*, August 1980 and July 1981).

Plans for the grounds at the RNR Center include stocking the pond and developing a tree walk through wooded areas for public enrichment. A tree-labeling project was started by SAF in 1975 when a "moon tree" was planted at the dedication of the Pinchot Building. This loblolly pine, thriving today, once traveled with the astronauts on a NASA moon shot. A seedling from the U.S. champion Wye Oak was also planted.

Natural vegetation at Wild Acres provides food and cover for birds and small wildlife. Last year, the RNR staff enjoyed watching a mother red fox and her brood who inhabited a drainage pipe under the drive. Grey squirrels remain active along with descendants of the famous record-setting birds.

Wild Acres combines a long conservation history with an environment rich in renewable natural resources—soil, water, air, plant, and animal life. It is an inspiring site for the promising RNR Center. □

THE AUTHOR—Barry W. Walsh is a staff writer with the SAF national office. He extends a special thanks to the Montgomery County Historical Society, to the Grosvenor family members who assisted with preparation of the article, and to Melville Bell Grosvenor who read the manuscript for accuracy.