

Wild Acres

Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Planning Board Submissions Received from:

5-29-2008 to Close of Business 6/12/2008

Coleman, Joyce

RECEIVED

JUN 04 2008

From: jguberman [jguberman@verizon.net]
Sent: Saturday, May 17, 2008 7:29 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Please add Wild Acres to Master Plan

**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION**

I've learned that the Montgomery County Historic Commission has recommended adding Wild Acres (the Grosvenor Estate) in Bethesda to the county's Master Plan for Historic Preservation. I completely support this action because of the property's significance for the people of this county. I've driven by the property many times and have walked around the grounds from time to time while visiting friends in the area. I have admired the beauty of the mansion, the little garage building next to it, and the grounds of the estate. Not only are these beautiful, they are also historic. I understand that Gilbert Grosvenor built the place. He started the National Geographic Society and its magazine. I also understand that his wife was Alexander Graham Bell's daughter and that the couple entertained many prominent people at Wild Acres. As I write this it also occurs to me that the estate is an important place in that part of the county—many of the streets and places are named for it (Grosvenor Lane, Grosvenor Metro, Grosvenor Mews townhouses).

I have lived in Montgomery County for many years and I don't know of any other place like Wild Acres in our area. Please protect the property's buildings and grounds as recommended by the Historic Commission. They deserve to be protected.

Thank you.

Joan Guberman

14805 Pennfield Circle #105
Silver Spring, MD 20906

From: jdrockstar [mailto:jdrockstar@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, May 19, 2008 1:44 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Support for adding Grosvenor Estate to the historic register

RECEIVED
JUN 04 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Hanson,

I have learned that the Grosvenor Estate in North Bethesda was unanimously recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission for historic designation. I live in the area and am pleased to learn of this development. The Commission found that the property clearly meets the criteria for inclusion on the county's Master Plan for Historic Preservation. I am writing to urge the Planning Board to accept the Commission's recommendation to include the three buildings used by the Grosvenors and their caretaker and the lawns and woods that surround these buildings. All contribute to the historical significance of the property because the buildings and landscape together convey how the Grosvenors planned and used their country retreat. I hope the board will vote to protect this important part of Bethesda history.

Jennifer Bricken

11108 Jolly Way

Kensington, MD 20895

Coleman, Joyce

From: Georgana Maines [mainesgnh@rcn.com]
Sent: Saturday, May 17, 2008 11:18 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Wild Acres (the Grosvenor estate) - Support the Designation to the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation

We have heard that the Grosvenor estate, Wild Acres, has been nominated for historical preservation. We are familiar with this property and believe the estate, with its several structures and wooded surroundings, preserves some unique history that must not be lost.

Future generations, by walking the grounds of this fine estate, will appreciate this important part of our heritage.

We strongly support its designation to the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Sincerely,

Henry and Georgana Maines
864 Diamond Drive
Gaithersburg MD

RECEIVED

JUN 04 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PARKS AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Coleman, Joyce

From: Michael Diehl [diehl.mike@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 04, 2008 10:07 AM
To: MCP-Chairman
Cc: Pat Davenport; Kelly, Clare; Coleman, Joyce
Subject: Fwd: Grosvenor Estate (Wild Acres)

RECEIVED
0595
JUN 04 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Hanson:

On May 29, the Planning Board heard testimony on the recommendation of the HPB on the Grosvenor Estate (Wild Acres).

Prior to the meeting, a number of county residents, including me, submitted letters on the matter, and received e-mail confirmations that our letters had been received, and would be placed before the Board.

It now appears, however, that some of the letters were never presented to the Board. A neighbor and friend of mine, Pat Davenport, has been in communication with Ms. Joyce Coleman about the problem.

I am attaching my original letter, and the e-mail confirmation that I received. I would request that my letter be placed before the Planning Board, and that the same be done for any other missing letters. Thank you.

-Michael Diehl
9902 Broad Street
Bethesda, MD
301.807.7828

----- Forwarded message -----

From: MCP-Chairman <MCP-Chairman@mncppc-mc.org>
Date: May 19, 2008 10:34 AM
Subject: RE: Grosvenor Estate (Wild Acres)
To: Michael Diehl <diehl.mike@gmail.com>

Thank you for your email. This is to acknowledge receipt of your Message.

Your information will be provided to Chairman Hanson.

Thank you for taking time to provide your comments.

Sincerely,

Marcia Goldberg

Marcia Goldberg

Community Outreach and Media Relations

8787 Georgia Avenue

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

301-495-4613 — 301-495-1320

From: Michael Diehl [mailto:diehl.mike@gmail.com]

Sent: Saturday, May 17, 2008 10:57 PM

To: MCP-Chairman

Cc: diehl.mike@gmail.com

Subject: Grosvenor Estate (Wild Acres)

Dear Chairman Hanson:

This letter supports the Historic Preservation Board's recommendation to list Wild Acres on the Montgomery County Historic Register. The recommendation extends to the mansion, the carriage house, the caretaker's quarters, and the environmental setting. Because designation of the mansion is not in dispute, I will address only the remaining elements of the estate.

Mr. Arthur Heaton, a master architect of the era, imbued the carriage house with distinctive characteristics. First, he located the carriage house immediately adjacent to the mansion, and not at a distance. Second, he coordinated the carriage house with the mansion architecturally. Third, he made the carriage house able to accommodate four automobiles.

These design choices demonstrate that the carriage house is an integral part of the estate, and not a utilitarian structure. By its location and coordinating architectural style, Mr. Heaton made the carriage house almost a part of the historic mansion. The care devoted to its design reveals the architect's appreciation for the importance of the automobile to life on the estate. The automobile allowed the Grosvenors a quick and comfortable means of transportation. The carriage house is also large enough to house the automobiles of

arriving guests. The care devoted to the design may even reflect Mr. Heaton's well known enthusiasm for things automotive. The prominence of the carriage house and what it reflects about life on the estate made it deserving of the HPB's unanimous recommendation.

Also deserving are the caretaker's quarters, which reflect the realities of a bygone era and perhaps the sensibilities of the Grosvenor family. That the quarters were built at all reflect that the estate was not the permanent residence of the Grosvenors. The estate would require upkeep between visits, and it would be unseemly to allow the caretaker to live in the mansion during the family's absences. The quarters also reflect a time when travel was too slow, and the surrounding area too isolated, to allow the caretaker to maintain the estate from a more distant location.

The placement of the quarters and their design are also revealing. Unlike the carriage house, the quarters are located a discreet distance from the mansion, allowing both the Grosvenors and the caretaker a degree of privacy. Moreover, the quarters were sturdy and relatively comfortable for the time. They were no afterthought, as they were designed by Mr. Heaton and their plans are housed in the Library of Congress. Their relatively substantial nature may reveal a conviction on the part of the Grosvenors that persons such as the caretaker were deserving of a certain dignity. Because the quarters reflect historical realities attendant to life on the estate during that time, and are perhaps revealing of the Grosvenors' sensibilities, they deserve historic designation as well.

Perhaps the defining characteristic of the estate is its environmental setting. The Grosvenors could have chosen to erect a large mansion in Washington, where it would have been admired by the public and served as a source of pride. Instead, they selected a pastoral setting, in keeping with the focus of Natural Geographic magazine, which contains many features on rural life and natural features. The estate is impossible to imagine in an urban setting, as the mansion would be completely out of place in the city. Because the mansion was designed for a rural setting, the environmental setting deserves historic designation as well. The environmental setting was the very reason for the estate: to serve as a place to retreat from city life and enjoy the pleasures of the country.

For all these reasons, I support designation of Wild Acres and urge you to consider the unanimous recommendation of the HPB.

Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Diehl

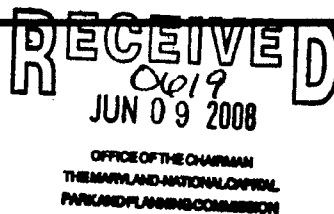
9902 Broad Street

Bethesda, MD

301.807.7828

MCP-Chairman

From: Elke Jordan [elke.jordan@verizon.net]
Sent: Saturday, June 07, 2008 9:32 AM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Designation of Wild Acres to the Historic Register



Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing in support of designating the Wild Acres property to the Historic Register. After listening to the testimony at the May 29 Planning Board meeting, where the nomination of this property was considered, I feel compelled to respond to some of the comments made.

There was a suggestion that the east wing of the mansion was of lesser interest because it housed the servant quarters. I would argue just the opposite, every component of the mansion, including stables and caretakers cottage contributes to the overall historic significance. It is exactly because all components are so well preserved, that this estate is so important.

Another suggestion was that the owners would not recognize the setting today, because so much has changed. My response is that Mr. Grosvenor would be tickled to see the trees he planted grown into mature plants. Of course plantings change over time. The estate was clearly planned as such, with surrounding lawns, a lake, and a dramatic driveway that deliberately approached at an angle so that the visitor could savor the quiet seclusion of the home, away from the busy road. The grand circle of the driveway in front of the mansion testifies to the gracious life style. Most of this setting is still intact and is critical to the integrity of the estate.

I urge you therefore to consider the mansion, the garage, the cottage, and the critical components of the setting as a unit that should be preserved for future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Elke Jordan



HUNTON & WILLIAMS LLP
1900 K STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006-1109

TEL 202 • 955 • 1500
FAX 202 • 778 • 2201

O. JULIA WELLER
DIRECT DIAL: 202-955-1849
EMAIL: jweller@hunton.com

FILE NO:

June 12, 2008

Via E-Mail

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

Re: Wild Acres, Resource #30-15, Nomination to Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Dear Chairman Hanson:

As the individual who nominated Wild Acres for inclusion on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, I would like to take this opportunity to respond to two issues that arose at the Montgomery County Planning Board (Board) Public Hearing on May 29, 2008: The environmental setting; and the issue of *res judicata*.

A. Environmental Setting

The Renewable Natural Resources Foundation (RNRF), through its counsel Linowes and Blocher LLP, have requested a designation of historic preservation limited to the former Grosvenor home and only the immediate surroundings of the mansion. The RNRF submission does *not* state whether "immediate surroundings" includes the carriage house or any part of the lawns in front or behind the mansion.

According to the Site Plan submitted by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) (but not included with the RNRF's submission), the "historic setting" would include the carriage house, with the boundary running alongside its eastern wall, and half of the circular driveway, a triangular-shaped wedge at the western end of the mansion and approximately one hundred feet to the south of the mansion. It would not encompass the gardener's cottage, the lawns on either the southern or the northern side of the mansion, the driveway from Grosvenor Lane to the mansion, or the thick screens of trees along Grosvenor Lane and Fleming Avenue, as

HUNTON WILLIAMS

Mr. Royce Hanson, Chairman

June 12, 2008

Page 2

proposed in the nomination and in the recommendation of the Staff of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

In support of their request, the RNRF references Section 24A-3 of the Montgomery County Ordinance, the intent of the Grosvenor family in its 1969 development application, various approvals received by the RNRF beginning in 1973, and the North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan. The RNRF also cites to previous recommendations of the Planning Board and Council regarding other historic properties.

1. Section 24A-3

The nomination in this instance specifically included each of the mansion, carriage house, and the gardener's cottage, as well as the "appurtenances and environmental setting." The Planning Board must therefore make a determination regarding *each of the contributing resources that were nominated*.

Section 24A-1 defines "Appurtenances and environmental setting" as including:

walkways and driveways (whether paved or not), vegetation (including trees, gardens, lawns) rocks, pasture, cropland and waterways.

Wild Acres was designed as a Tudor Revival estate, echoing the country homes of England with their sweeping lawns, wooded glades, ponds and stands of mature trees shading the driveways and protecting the manor houses from public view. As demonstrated in the materials submitted with the nomination, in the HPC Staff report and recommendation, and at the April 23 hearing before the HPC and the May 29 hearing before Board, each of the mansion, carriage house, caretaker's cottage and environmental setting that make up Wild Acres qualify for designation *individually and as an ensemble* under Section 24A-3. They all contribute to the historic and architectural importance of the property, which has survived as a suburban country estate from 1928 to the present with much of its environmental setting remarkably intact.

Tearing down the gardener's cottage, slicing the driveway in half and chopping the spacious lawns surrounding the manor house and the carriage house into the size of a townhouse patio would be akin trimming a rare and beautiful painting to fit it into a smaller frame, or like amputating the arms of a Greek statue to make it fit into a smaller room. Wild Acres will not be Wild Acres if it is dismembered in the way suggested by the RNRF.

HUNTON WILLIAMS

Mr. Royce Hanson, Chairman

June 12, 2008

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2. Grosvenor Family "Intent"

The Grosvenor family's plans for Wild Acres in 1970, as described by the RNRF, are not relevant to a determination in 2008 of the cultural, historic and architectural significance of the property. In 1970, Gilbert Grosvenor had only been dead for four years and the mansion and carriage house were not even 50 years old. The property was larger then than it is today because Fleming Park did not yet exist. Moreover, the Planning Board expressed reservations about the offer of the mansion, parkland and a building tract for an elementary school in return for permission to develop the authorization because of the density of the proposed development (See Attachment 1). Local citizens associations fought the development plans because they would more than double the density of the area and create traffic problems. (See Attachment 2). The proposed development did not go forward.

3. Approvals Received by RNRF

The excerpts of the Board of Appeals approvals for the RNRF plans and the 1992 North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan for Wild Acres attached to Linowes and Blocher letter purport to show the "continuing governmental approval and consensus that the Property is not historic, nor should the approved development be limited by any 'setting.'" What the letter fails to mention, however, is the RNRF's own commitment in a 1980 letter to the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission that construction of the new buildings on the site would "complement the existing mansion *and protect and enhance the natural beauty of the site.*" (emphasis added) (See Attachment 3). That letter requested a hearing by the Planning Board regarding inclusion of Wild Acres on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, and at the same time argued against inclusion, all the while promising that "absolutely none of the exterior features of the mansion have been or will be altered in any respect during the contemplated construction phases." The RNRF representative also acknowledged that the property could qualify as culturally significant in that the property is "identified with a person or group of persons who influence[sic] society." Thus, it is not unexpected that the discussions of the mansion in the Board of Appeals excerpts do not go into detail about its historic value, because the RNRF had made a commitment to preserve the mansion and protect the environmental setting.

The RNRF also made much of Wild Acres' environmental setting in its promotional materials. It described the "lush vegetation and forested areas" and noted that the name Wild Acres "is quite appropriate." (See Attachment 4 at 6) As a conglomeration of associations devoted to nature, it saw the mansion in relation to the woods, rather than the other way around. The house is described in the following terms: "Enhancing the natural beauty of the property is the exceedingly well built Grosvenor mansion." (Attachment 4 at 8).

HUNTON WILLIAMS

Mr. Royce Hanson, Chairman

June 12, 2008

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The RNRf's commitment to the Planning Board that it would develop the site with sensitivity is reflected in the plans themselves which, contrary to the new headings added by RNRf's lawyers claiming "caretaker's house not preserved", all clearly show retention of the cottage and the carriage house. While the Site Plans also show the lawn to the north of the mansion bifurcated by a second driveway off Grosvenor Lane and the view shed to the south sharply curtailed by a new building and parking on the southwest portion of the property, other features that make up some of the environmental setting were to be preserved. Notably, the southern lawn, circular driveway and thick screen of trees along Grosvenor Lane remain.

The RNRf's current position that the environmental setting should be limited to a tiny fraction of its existing setting is therefore sharply at odds with its previous position.

B. Res Judicata

The May 28, 2008 letter from lawyers representing the SAF argues that the 1980 decisions of the HPC, the Planning Board and the County Council should be given preclusive effect and that a *de novo* review of the Wild Acres property should be barred in accordance with the principle of administrative *res judicata*. The elements of this doctrine are described in the Second Restatement of Judgments in § 83, which is quoted in full by Prof. Kenneth Culp Davis in his classic *Administrative Law Treatise*.¹ It provides:

"(1) Except as stated in Subsection (2), (3), and (4), a valid and final adjudicative determination by an administrative tribunal has the same effects under the rules of *res judicata*, subject to the same exceptions, as a judgment of a court." Subsection (2) requires for *res judicata* "the essential elements of adjudication"; ... Subsection (3) makes an exception when the scheme of remedies permits assertion of a second claim notwithstanding the adjudication of the first claim." And subsection (4) protects against *res judicata* when it "would be incompatible with a legislative policy."

Before addressing the arguments made by the SAF, consideration should be given to whether, because of the peculiar nature of historic preservation, *res judicata* is "incompatible with the legislative policy" found in Ch. 24A of the Code. The title of that chapter is "Historic Resources Preservation". The very notion of historic preservation presupposes that a resource has become "historic" due to the passage of time. A Sistine Chapel may become a national treasure the minute it is completed, but a log cabin becomes historic only after many decades and the loss of all others like it. It is a truism in the world of art that an artist's work is valued only after the artist dies--and often only many decades after the artist's death. Similarly,

¹ Davis, K.C., *Administrative Law Treatise*, (2d ed.), vol. 4, at 51 (U. of San Diego, 1983)

HUNTON WILLIAMS

Mr. Royce Hanson, Chairman

June 12, 2008

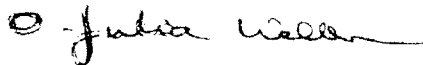
Page 5

architects and architecture may only become appreciated with the passage of time and with the dwindling of the housing stock reflecting a particular period or style.

It would seem inconsistent with the legislative policy inherent in this Chapter of the Code to say that a resource found not to qualify for historic preservation in 1980, when many other large mansions and estates may well still have graced Rockville Pike, cannot, 28 years later, be recognized as worthy of protection. The application of *res judicata* to a historic preservation law would not allow for a growth in public appreciation of a particular architect or artist, or a particular individual's achievements. Application of *res judicata* in this instance would require the "freezing in time" of an aesthetic sensibility. Clearly, this undercuts the very nature of historic preservation.

In sum, a threshold issue for the Planning Board to consider is whether the exception (4) in Prof. Davis's itemization of exceptions above makes the *res judicata* rule inapplicable in the case of historic preservation.

Sincerely,

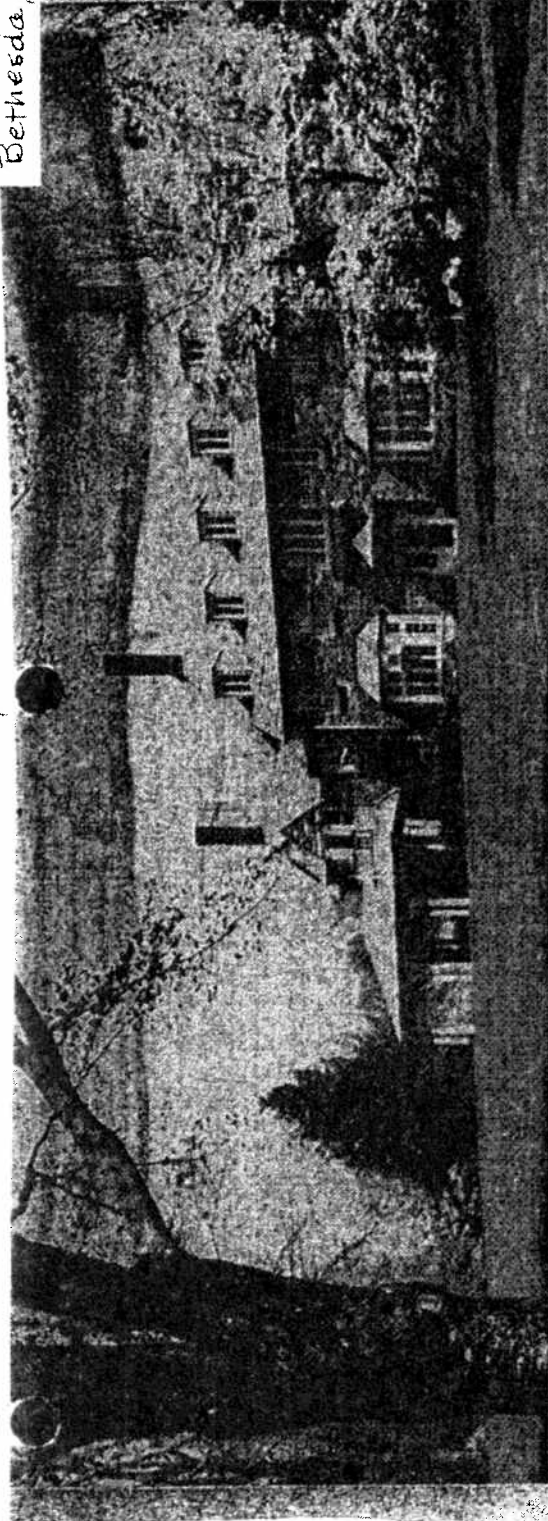


O. Julia Weller

Attachments

cc: Deborah D. Daniel, Esq.
Clare Lise Kelly, M-NCPPC Staff

Bethesda



This is the Grosvenor mansion being offered to Montgomery County.

Grosvenor Mansion Offered as County Center

By MARY W. COOPER

The mansion of the late Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, who built the National Geographic Society and its magazine and the world's largest nonprofit scientific organization has offered to Montgomery County for use as a cultural and community center.

In addition to the 22-room English Tudor mansion, Grosvenor had five daughters and five granddaughters who have offered the county 1.5 acres of land for use as a school and six acres for an elementary school in honor of the late Dr. Grosvenor.

The mansion would be continued as a cultural center, but it would be open to the public and used for residential development, but that all plans will be under the direction of the Grosvenor family.

Linowes said no developer has yet been selected for the residential development, but that all plans will be under the direction of the Grosvenor family.

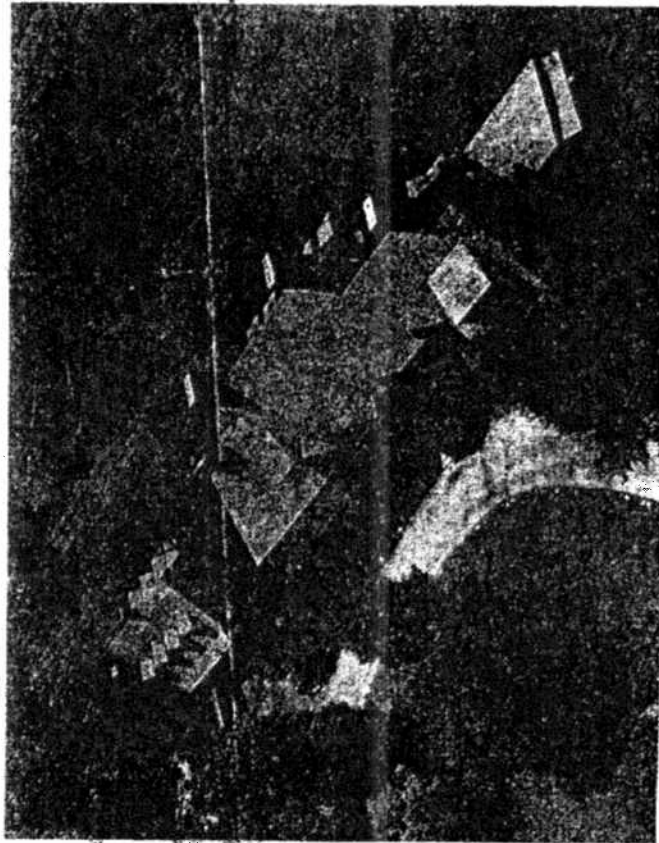
The Grosvenor mansion, completed in 1929, and now valued at \$500,000 and \$750,000, could be used either as a cultural arts or community center and would be ideal for residential development.

The house has 16 bedrooms and eight baths in addition to a large living room, dining room and kitchen.

Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society from 1899 to 1924, lived in the house until he died in 1926 at the age of 90. Since 1927 the house has been rented by the National Geographic Society for use as a temporary facility for the society's headquarters.

The Grosvenor estate at 5400 Grosvenor Lane, was

Star - January 27, 1970



Wild Acres, the home of Dr. and Mrs. Gilbert Grosvenor. More varieties of bird life are to be found on this estate than anywhere else in the United States.

BIOGRAPHY - Grosvenor, Gilbert H.

2 Groups Join to Fight Grosvenor Zoning Act

Hornes

W. STAR FEB 6 1970

By MARVIN COBLE
Star Staff Writer

Two North Bethesda citizens' groups, representing about 800 families have joined forces to oppose rezoning applications which, if approved, would pave the way for a \$10 million town-house and garden-apartment complex in their single-family neighborhood.

If approved, the rezoning would mean Montgomery County would be given a 22-room English Tudor mansion for use as a cultural arts or community center.

However, the Wildwood Manor and Lone Oak Citizens Associations maintain this gift would not compensate for the high-density land use and increased traffic generated by the proposed development.

The mansion was the home of the late Dr. Gilbert H. Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society and editor of its magazine from 1899 to 1964. In addition to the mansion, his family has offered the county 12.2 surrounding acres for parkland and six acres for an elementary school if the rezoning applications are approved.

The 50-acre tract the family hopes to develop is bounded by Interstate Route 70S, the Capital Beltway, Grosvenor Lane and Fleming Avenue. The land is now zoned single-family residential.

Hire Lawyer

In their fight against the rezoning, the citizens' groups have hired Silver Spring lawyer Howard J. Thomas. On March 23 he will argue their case before the county hearing examiner, who will make a recommendation to the county council.

Thomas said yesterday that 642 garden-apartment units and 240 townhouses could be built on the Grosvenor tract under the proposed zoning. This, he said, would double the density of the immediate neighborhood and

create hazardous traffic conditions on Grosvenor Lane, the only road in the area linking heavily traveled Rockville Pike and Old Georgetown Road.

Thomas also said that approval of the applications would increase the chances that two other undeveloped tracts of land in the area might be rezoned to higher-density use.

One of these is the 24-acre Aubinoe tract, which fronts on Old Georgetown Road and Rt. 70S. Citizens in the area went to the Court of Appeals to reverse a decision of the old county council to rezone the land for high-rise use.

In presenting plans for the proposed development, the attorney for the family, R. Robert Linowes, argued that the site 2,000 feet from a proposed rapid transit station and is therefore suitable for high-density use.

Thomas said, however, that the property is separated from the proposed station by Rt. 70S and "certainly it can't be said persons living in this complex would walk to the Metro center."

Sees Asset to County

Linowes said the Grosvenor Mansion, which he valued at between \$500,000 and \$750,000, would be an asset to the county as a community or cultural arts center and would be "ideally" suited for regional conferences such as the ones now held at Airlie House in Warrenton, Va.

North Bethesda residents opposed to the rezoning have scheduled a meeting at 8 p.m. Monday at Grosvenor Elementary School to map strategy and raise funds to finance their legal fight. There also will be a reorganization of the Lone Oak Citizens Association at the same meeting.

Also on record against the rezoning is the North Bethesda Congress of Citizens Association, which represents a number of citizens groups in the area, including Wildwood Manor and Lone Oak.

LAW OFFICES
LERCH, EARLY & ROSEMAN
CHARTERED

1313 FORD BUILDING
7101 WISCONSIN AVENUE
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20014

(301) 986-1300

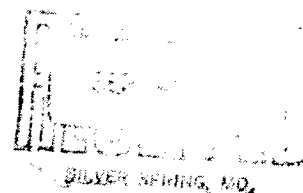
HARRY W. LERCH
RONALD L. EARLY
ROBERT D. ROSEMAN
LAWRENCE L. BELL
RICHARD H. TANENBAUM
ROBERT G. BREWER, JR.
CONSTANCE B. LOHSE

HENRY F. LERCH
OF COUNSEL

WILTON H. WALLACE
(1950-1959)
KIRK V. BELL
(1852-1970)

September 24, 1980

Mr. Denis Canavan
Planner, Development Review Division
Maryland National Capital Park and
Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910



Re: Renewable Natural Resources Foundation
S-257
Historic Preservation

Dear Denis:

As you know, our client, Renewable Natural Resources Foundation, is proceeding with its plans to implement further its eleemosynary and philanthropic institution special exception. Subsequent to renovation of the Grosvenor Mansion several years ago, the architectural plans were prepared for Building I, Phase I, of the new construction process.

During your recent review of those plans on behalf of the County Board of Appeals, the question was raised as to the applicability of Chapter 24A, Montgomery County Code (Preservation of Historic Resources) to the new construction plans, since the Grosvenor estate is listed on the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County, Maryland. Rather than attempting to utilize the literal language of the law to avoid its applicability to our client's plans, we respectfully request that the Planning Board hold its hearing as soon as practicable as to inclusion of the property on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

We submit that the Foundation property should not be designated as an Historic Site by the Planning Board. As to the historical and cultural significance criteria, we believe that none of them are applicable, with the possible exception of the criteria that the property is "identified with a person or group of persons who influence society." As far as we are aware, the Grosvenor estate has not contributed to the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the area, nor does it exemplify the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the area. As to the

LERCH, EARLY & ROSEMAN, CHARTERED

Mr. Denis Canavan
September 24, 1980
Page 2

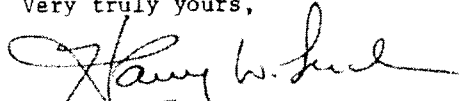
architectural and design criteria, once again, we believe that these criteria do not apply to the existing mansion on the site. While the mansion certainly is an attractive building, it is neither very old, architecturally distinctive, nor possessing a high artistic value. Due to its setback and extensive screening from Grosvenor Lane, it has never been a visual feature of the area. Moreover, absolutely none of the exterior features of the mansion have been or will be altered in any respect during the contemplated construction phases.

As you know, the current plans call for construction of several new buildings on the site. The original Master Plan for this site was prepared by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, and has been recently revised by Donald N. Coupard, AIA, & Associates. The architectural plans prepared by Mr. Coupard propose buildings which complement the existing mansion and protect and enhance the natural beauty of the site.

Based upon the foregoing, we respectfully request that the Planning Board hold its hearing as soon as possible, and that our client's property not be included on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter with you further, and will be happy to answer any questions which you or the Planning Board may have.

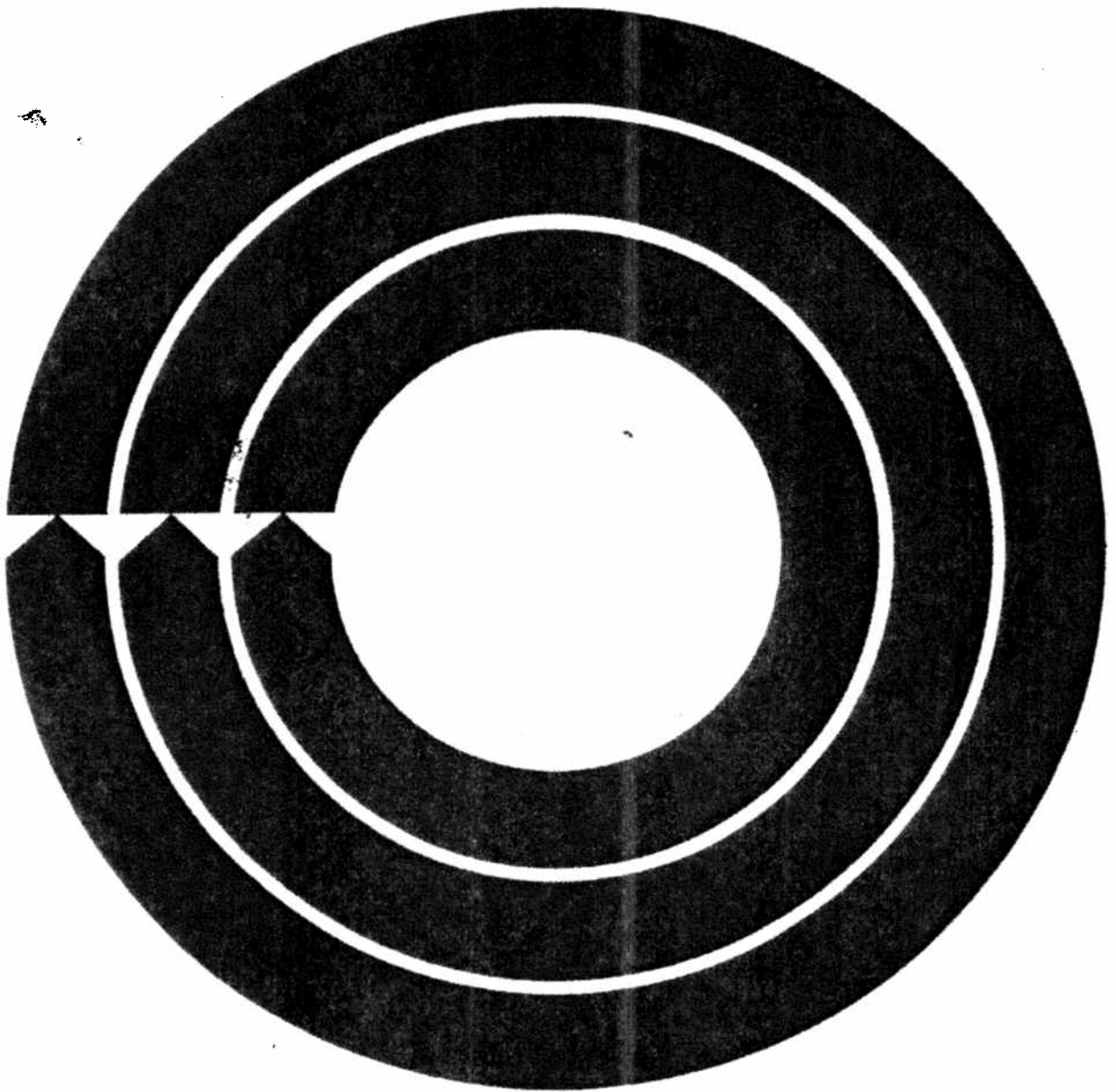
Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,


Harry W. Lerch

HWL:emt

The Renewable Natural Resources Foundation



11/25/2011
gross revenue estate

Summary of Creation, Purposes and Programs

Creation

The Renewable Natural Resources Foundation was created in 1972 as a non-profit, public, tax-exempt, charitable foundation to engage in research, dissemination of research results, education and information services, and to assist in policy formulation relating to renewable natural resources. Renewable natural resources are earth resources which can be utilized, and maintained, replenished or recycled at continuing satisfactory levels of quality and abundance through management. These resources include soil, water, air, vegetation and animal life.

Present Foundation membership consists of eleven national, professional, scientific-educational societies working in renewable natural resources.

Governed by a Board of Directors of distinguished scientists and professionals from the major disciplines related to renewable natural resources, the Foundation will provide on a timely basis accurate, urgently needed information on the earth's renewable resources.

The Foundation plans to establish a center near Washington, D. C. on a recently acquired tract of 35 acres, formerly the family estate of the late Dr. Gilbert H. Grosvenor of the National Geographic Society. A master site plan for the development and utilization of the tract has been prepared by the architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

Initial financial objectives of the Foundation include retirement of site acquisition costs, remodeling of the Grosvenor mansion and construction of a building to be used as the national headquarters of the Foundation and member societies. These costs are estimated to be approximately \$4,250,000. Funds will be derived in part from member societies and the remainder from corporations, foundations and interested individuals.

Purposes

To identify and fill the knowledge gaps in renewable natural resources.

To expedite the dissemination and application of scientific knowledge and practices in the management and use of renewable natural resources.

To provide a comprehensive source of scientific information on the physical, biological and social sciences, economics, and the law pertaining to renewable natural resources.

To facilitate coordination and cooperation among professional societies and organizations having leadership responsibilities for renewable natural resources.

To establish a center for the member societies which will provide an appropriate working environment for cooperative endeavor and permit the most efficient, economical operation of each society.



Programs

Conduct an interdisciplinary assessment of future social, economic, and technological trends and their impacts on the management and use of renewable natural resources to establish objectives and priorities for research programs.

Analyze the opportunities for substituting renewable natural resources for non-renewable natural resources.

Determine the capacity of the earth to provide renewable natural resources on a sustained basis and evaluate how this capacity can help meet world needs and improve international trade balance.

Develop and provide education programs and information services on renewable natural resources for decision-makers and the general public.

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Certified Public Accountants

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Geologist, former U. S. Ambassador to Turkey and Germany

DR. FRANK PACE, JR.
Corporation executive, President of the International Executive Service Corps

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Chairman, Department of Limnology, Academy of Natural Sciences

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DR. ROBERT C. SEAMANS, JR.
President of the National Academy of Engineering

DR. STEPHEN H. SPURR
Forester, President of The University of Texas

DR. JAMES H. WAKELIN, JR.
Research administrator, President of the Research Analysis Corporation

DR. JAMES E. WEBB
Former Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Member Organizations

American Fisheries Society.

Founded in 1870, the oldest conservation society in the nation, this society now numbers 5,000 members who promote the educational and scientific advancement of all branches of fishery science, and the conservation, development and wise utilization of fisheries, both recreational and commercial.

Society of American Foresters.

Founded in 1900, this society's 19,000 members make it the largest of RNR's organizations. It is dedicated to the advancement of the sciences, technologies, practices, and education of professional forestry in America.

Ecological Society of America.

The 4,000 members of this society, founded in 1915, are dedicated to the scientific study of organisms in relation to their environment, and to facilitating the exchange of ideas among those interested in ecology.

American Geophysical Union.

This organization, with 10,500 members, was founded in 1919, and is dedicated to the promotion of all aspects of the physics and chemistry of the earth. It gives special attention to the interrelationships of the work of specialists in many diverse fields and develops the basic sciences used to understand the earth's natural resources.

The Wildlife Society.

Totalling over 6,000 members, this society, founded in 1937, works to establish and maintain the highest professional standards in wildlife management along sound biological lines.

American Association for Conservation Information.

Founded in 1938, the association promotes the free exchange of ideas and information bearing on conservation education, and fosters conservation education throughout the United States.

American Water Resources Association.

This association, founded in 1964, advances water resources research, planning, development and management; establishes a common meeting ground for engineers, and physical, biological, and social scientists concerned with water resources; collects, organizes, and disseminates information in the field of water resources science and technology.

The Institute of Ecology.

The newest of the organizations belonging to RNR, the institute, founded in 1971, strives to enable research institutions and concerned individuals to cooperate in enhancing man's understanding of ecological conditions and public implications, and in increasing the flow of accurate environmental information.

Association of Interpretive Naturalists.

The association, founded in 1961, advances education and develops skills in the art of interpreting the natural environment as a service to the public.

American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta.

Founded in 1940, and the smallest of the Foundation's members, the association promotes horticultural, botanical and educational advancement of arboreta and botanical gardens in North America. It facilitates the exchange of plant material and herbarium specimens.

Society for Range Management.

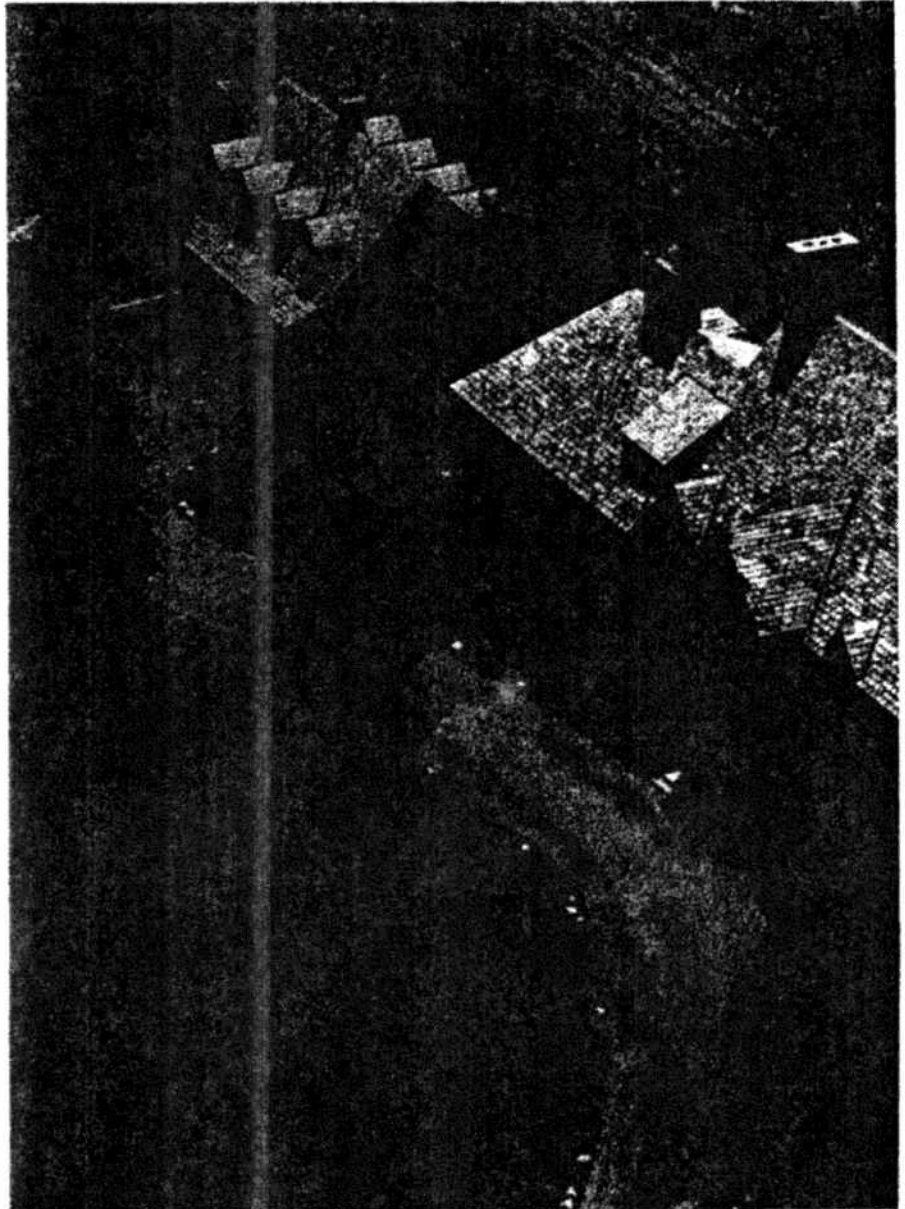
The purpose of this society is to develop an understanding of rangeland ecosystems and the principles applicable to the management of range resources, and to create a public appreciation of the economic and social benefits obtained from range management. Founded in 1948, this society presently has a membership of 5,000.

Location and Description of the Site for the Center

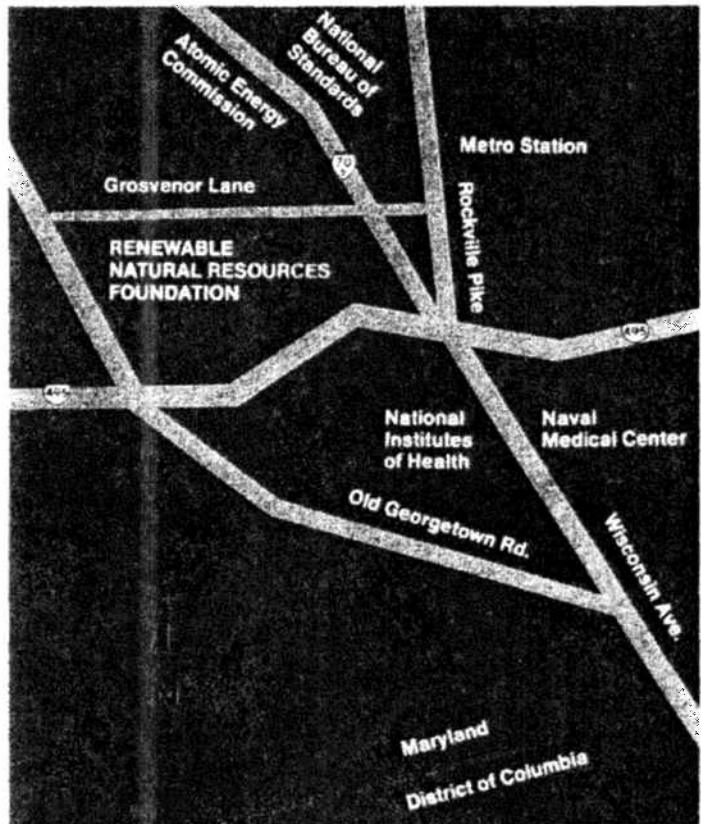
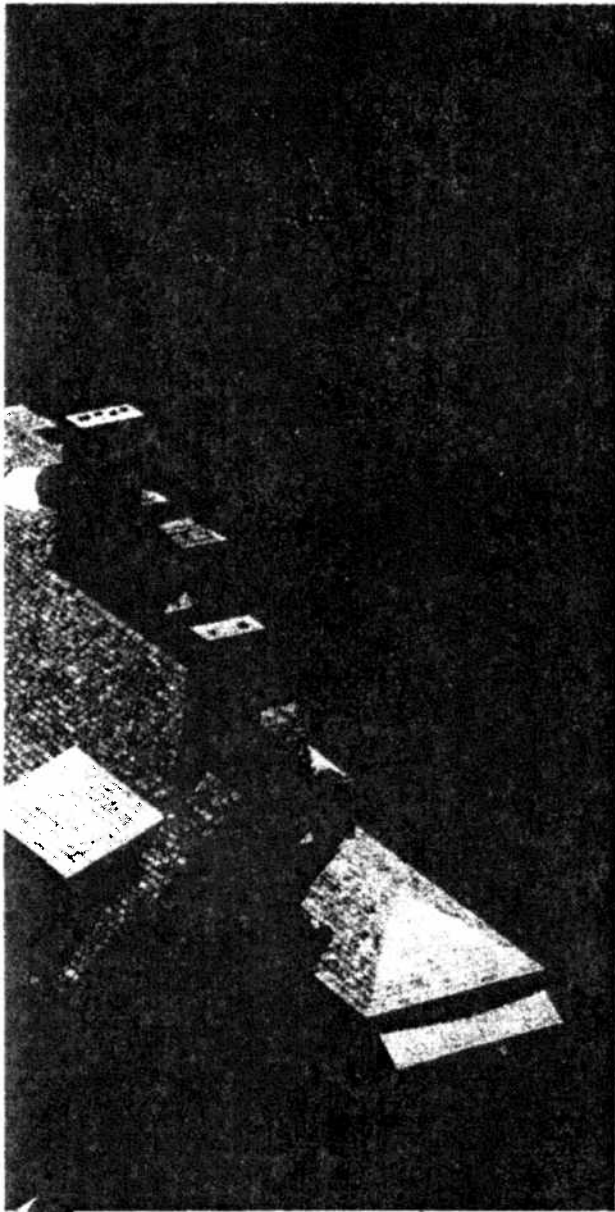
Great care was taken in selection of the site. Situated at a major intersection on the Capital Beltway in North Bethesda, Maryland, the site provides an ideal location for the national headquarters of the various member organizations. Secluded by lush vegetation and forested areas, and with fast public transportation to downtown Washington, D. C. assured by early completion of Metro Rapid Transit System's nearby station, the site combines the virtues of natural beauty and accessibility.

"Wild Acres," the original name given to the property, is quite appropriate. The building site is surrounded by thickly wooded areas of elm, oak, beech, red maple, white pine, dogwood, wild roses, and honeysuckle. A pond and streams lace the property. Diverse wildlife inhabit the tract. All of these will be maintained in their natural state.

Continued on page 8

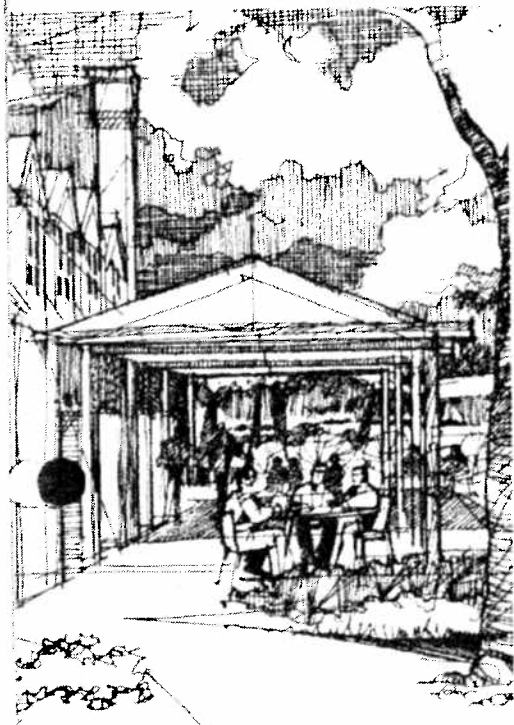


Copyright National Geographic Society.



The site is strategically located in Montgomery County, Maryland at the intersection of the Capital Beltway, Interstate 70S and Rockville Pike. Times to major points. Downtown Washington, 14 minutes (Metro); National Airport, 20 minutes (Metro); Dulles International Airport, 25 minutes (automobile).

View of mansion being remodeled for national headquarters of Society of American Foresters and American Fisheries Society.



Enhancing the natural beauty of the property is the exceedingly well built Grosvenor mansion. It is now being remodeled at an estimated cost of \$350,000 for early occupancy by member societies on a lease basis. The Society of American Foresters and the American Fisheries Society will occupy this building in early 1975.

Initial plans feature the construction of a central services facility by early 1976 to meet a number of requirements shared by the member societies. These include central administration, offices, public information services, printing, mailing and computer facilities, library, and conference and seminar rooms. In the intermediate stage, the Center will be increased by approximately 100,000 square feet of floor space, to be leased to member organizations and to provide laboratory and other program-related facilities for visiting scientists.

Ultimate plans call for buildings at the Center not to exceed a total of 300,000 square feet, highlighted by a conference hall with appropriate audio-visual equipment for educational purposes.

Here scientific lectures and demonstrations by leading authorities will supplement the Center's continuing research and educational programs on critical environmental problems. In addition to the conference hall, the final construction will include additional offices to accommodate the Foundation's growing services in research, information and education.

The Foundation's dealings with local authorities and citizens' groups have been marked by a spirit of friendly cooperation. After reviewing the Foundation's plans for the property, the Montgomery County Board of Appeals modified the zoning of the land to accommodate its use as the site for the Foundation's activities.

Portions of Wild Acres showing planned initial construction for administrative and member society offices.

First Phase Financial Requirements

The Renewable Natural Resources Foundation has purchased 35 acres of the Grosvenor estate, a most desirable site for centralization of headquarters and administrative functions of the Foundation and its member societies. With loans from member societies and a bank, the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation was successful in acquiring the Grosvenor site at an approximate cost of \$1,400,000.

It is expected that costs of remodeling the mansion and the adjoining two-story garage-apartment for occupancy by two member societies on a lease basis will be \$350,000.

An initial new building to house other member societies and administrative and service personnel of the Foundation will cost an estimated \$2,500,000.

The Foundation's total capital requirements for debt retirement, building remodeling, and initial new building are approximately \$4,250,000.

Coleman, Joyce

From: Charles P. Schaeffer [chatsworth42@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2008 3:14 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: HISTORIC STATUS/GROSVENOR PROPERTY

RECEIVED
JUN 12 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

To: Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board

Please add my name to the supporters of the nomination of Wild Acres to the County's Master Plan for Historic Preservation. I would recommend inclusion in the preservation presentation wording covering the Mansion, carriage house, the caretaker's house and the full environmental setting described in the May 22 MNCPPC memorandum which recommended the designation. Testimony I have heard and read appears to fully justify approval of the application. Many thanks for your generous attention to our community's interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

Charles Schaeffer
Member, Board of Wildwood Manor Citizens Association

Coleman, Joyce

From: Grosvenor@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2008 3:03 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Wild Acres Historic Preservation Nomination

RECEIVED
JUN 12 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Royce Hanson, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board

Dear Mr. Hanson,

On behalf of Grosvenor Homeowners Association I would like to express our support for the Wild Acres Historic Preservation Nomination. The members of our community, which sits directly across Grosvenor Lane from Wild Acres, have always considered this estate to be an important part of the history of Bethesda. The mansion, together with the carriage house and caretakers cottage, has survived in its original environmental setting and represents the country estates that were created in the 1920's by wealthy Washingtonians as summer and weekend retreats.

To convey this use of the estate it is essential to retain not only the mansion, carriage house and caretakers cottage, but also the surrounding environmental setting. To designate only the structures for historic preservation, without including the approach to the mansion, the surrounding lawns and woods, and views from the house would greatly diminish their value as a historic landmark.

Sincerely,

James M. Meister
President, Grosvenor Homeowners Association

Vote for your city's best dining and nightlife. [City's Best 2008](#).

MCP-CTRACK

From: Weller, Julia [jweller@hunton.com]
Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2008 4:27 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Cc: Daniel, Debra; Kelly, Clare
Subject: Wild Acres Resource #30/15 Additional Information
Attachments: Wild Acres.pdf

RECEIVED
0447
JUN 12 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Importance: High

Dear Chairman Hanson,

Attached please find additional material to add to the record regarding the nomination of Wild Acres, Resource No. 30/15 for designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Regards,

Julia Weller

v [] [] []		
O. Julia Weller Counsel jweller@hunton.com		
Hunton & Williams LLP 1900K Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20006 Phone: (202) 955-1849 Fax: (202) 828-3734 www.hunton.com		

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Coleman, Joyce

From: Lisa_Goenner [Lisa_Goenner@london.net]
Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2008 4:55 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Support for Historic Designation of the Grosvenor Mansion and Setting of "Wild Acres"

June 12, 2008

Mr. Royce Hanson, Chairman
Planning Board
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RECEIVED
0649
JUN 12 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL OPEN SPACE
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Hanson:

I'm writing to reiterate my very strongest support for the nomination to give historic designation to the buildings and grounds that comprise "Wild Acres." I want to ask for your support, as well, and for your decision *in favor* of preserving the Grosvenor mansion, its carriage house, the caretaker's cottage, and the setting of all three as you begin your work session on this issue.

With every passing year, properties like "Wild Acres" are becoming ever more scarce on the landscape of Montgomery County. In Bethesda, they are rare, indeed. The testimony you have heard, the documentation supporting that testimony, and the scores of letters and emails and petitions signed by county residents, all make an overwhelming case to preserve Gilbert Grosvenor's estate before it is too late.

I hope you will give your full consideration to the many who want to preserve "Wild Acres" for all its significant assets: architectural, cultural, environmental. The unanimous recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission, along with the compelling testimony of the many County residents who value the historic touchstones of our community, are now in your hands.

Please fully support the historic designation of "Wild Acres."

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Goenner

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

June 10, 2008

RECEIVED
JUN 12 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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.

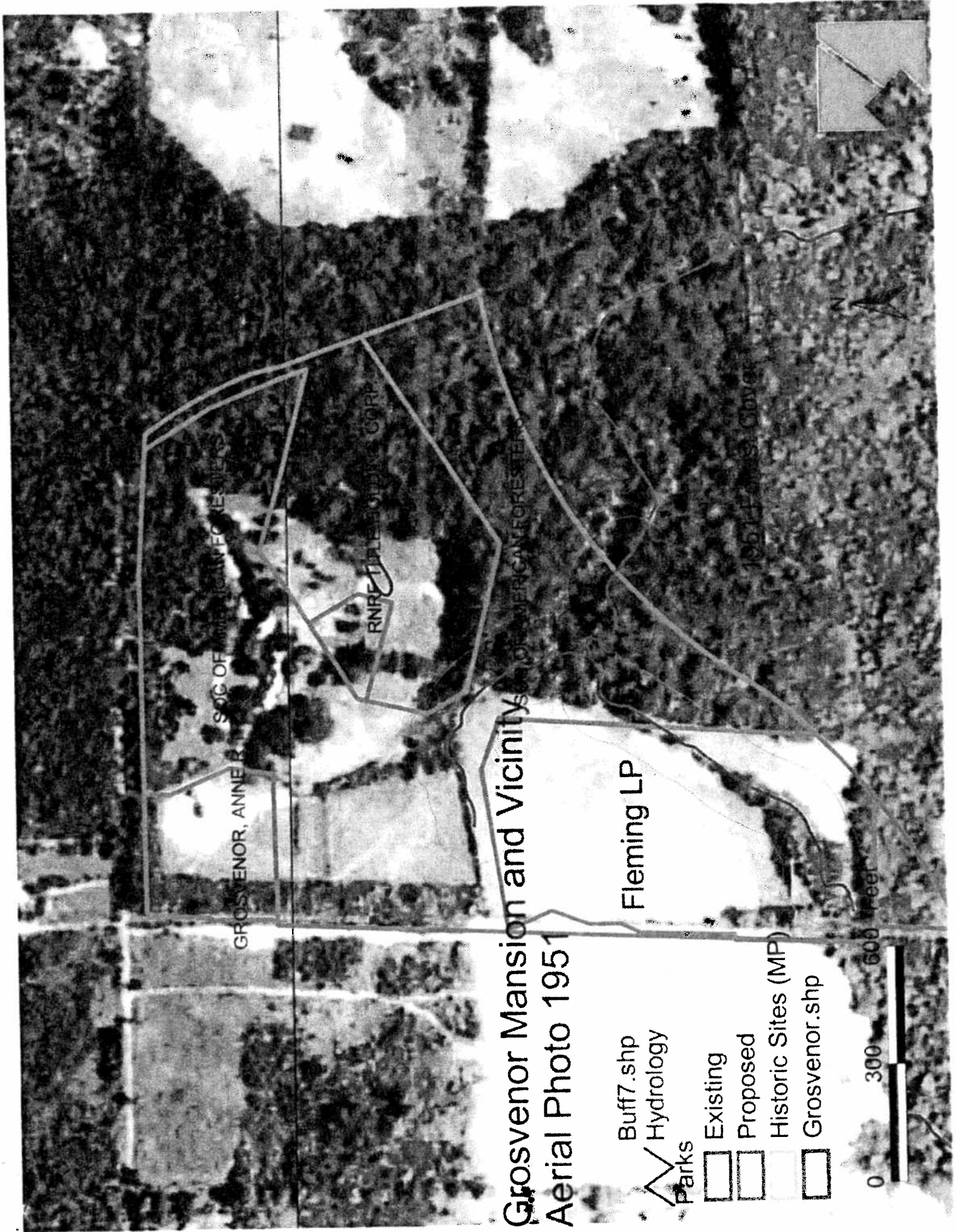
Enclosed also find two aerial views from 1951 and the present. The intent of the nominator was to preserve the Gilbert Grosvenor country estate, as he would recognize it, and not the farm on which it was built. The maps clearly show the tree borders that were an important part of the estate, as they 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
- Parks
- Existing
- Proposed
- Historic Sites (MP)
- Grosvenor.shp

0 300 600 Feet



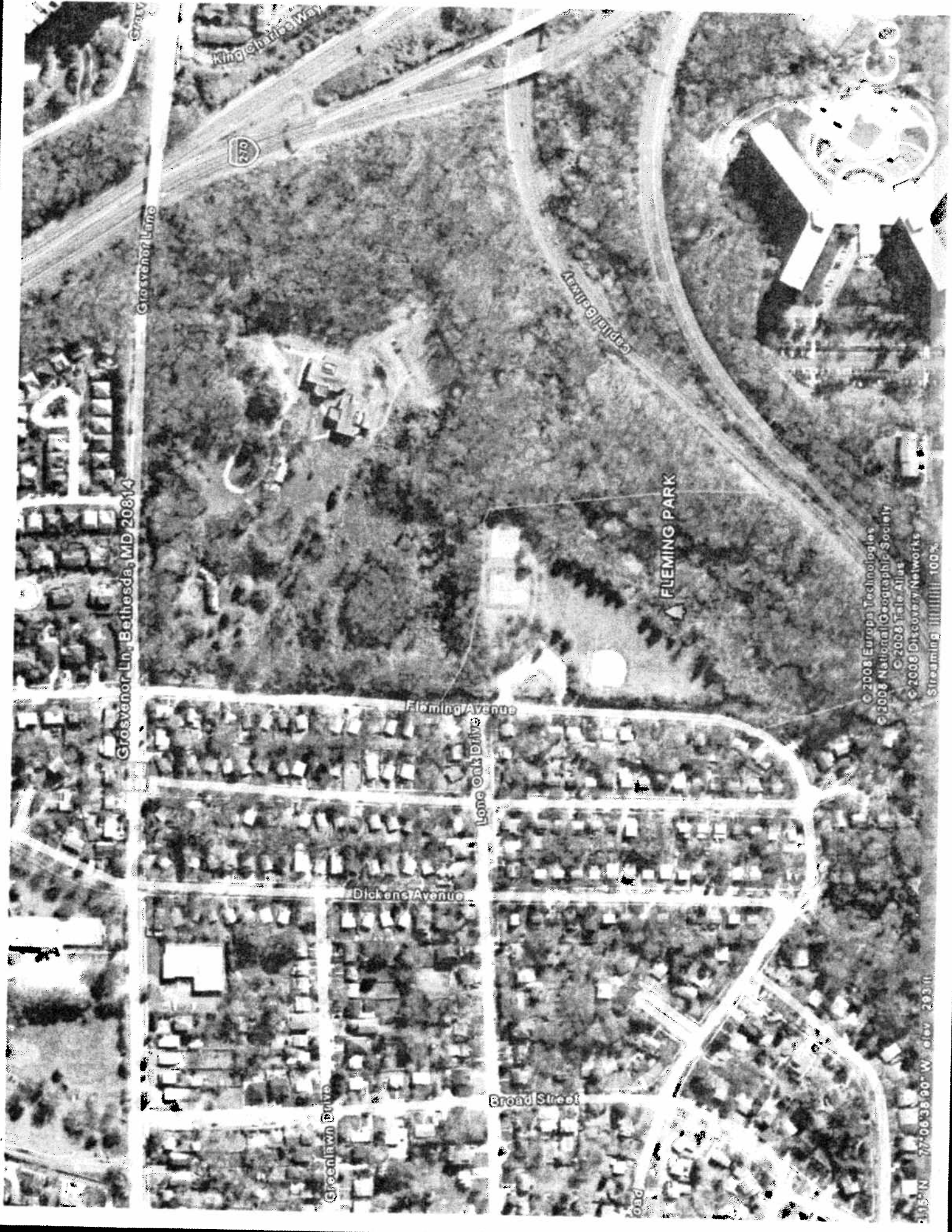
GROSVENOR, ANNE B. TRACT

SOG OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

RNRE TRIPLE BOUNDARY CORP

10571 E. 10th St. Grove

FLEMING LP



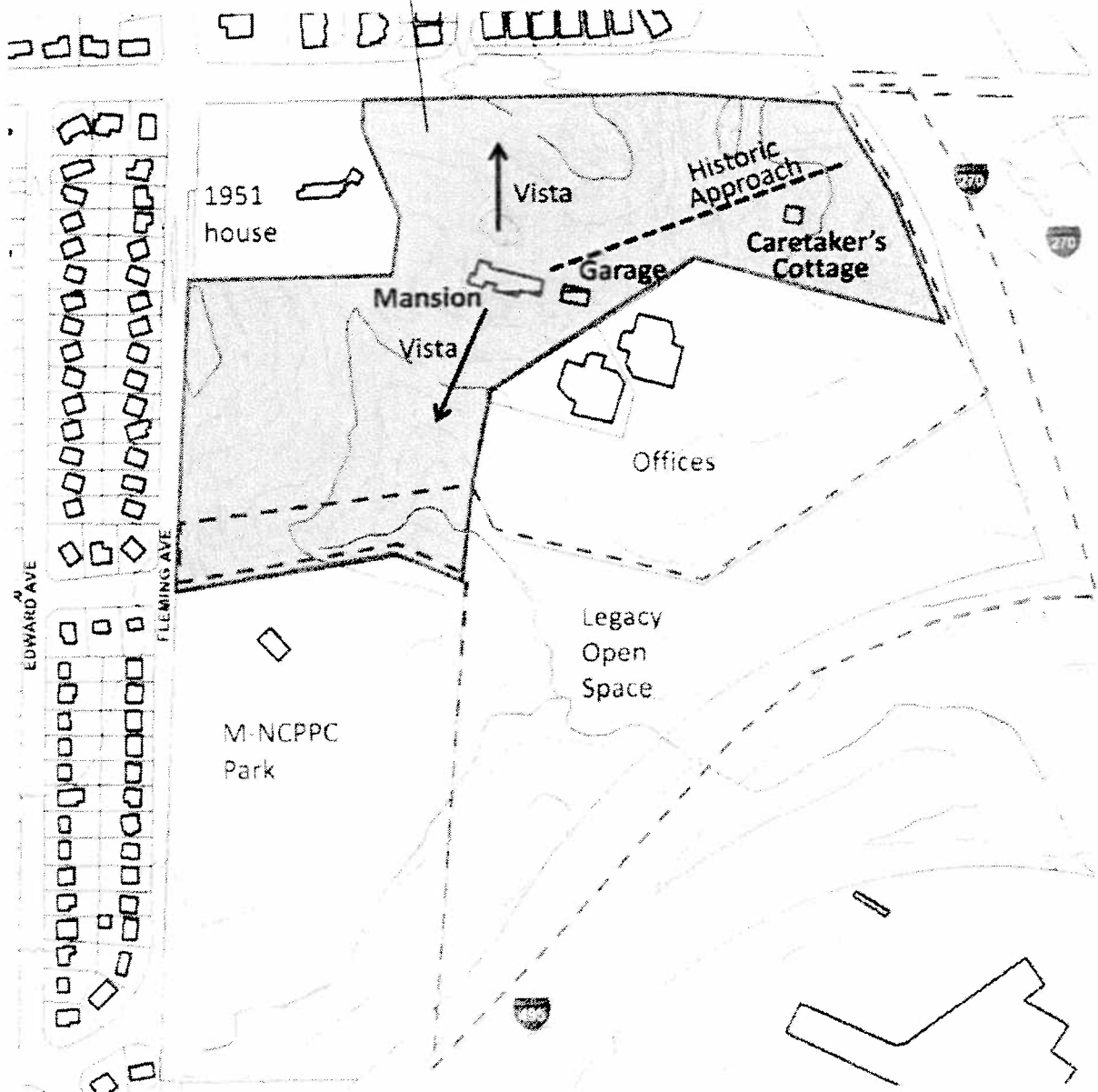
Grosvenor Ln, Bethesda, MD 20814

FLEMING PARK

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

38°55'N 77°06'38.90"W elev 293 ft

Recommended Environmental Setting

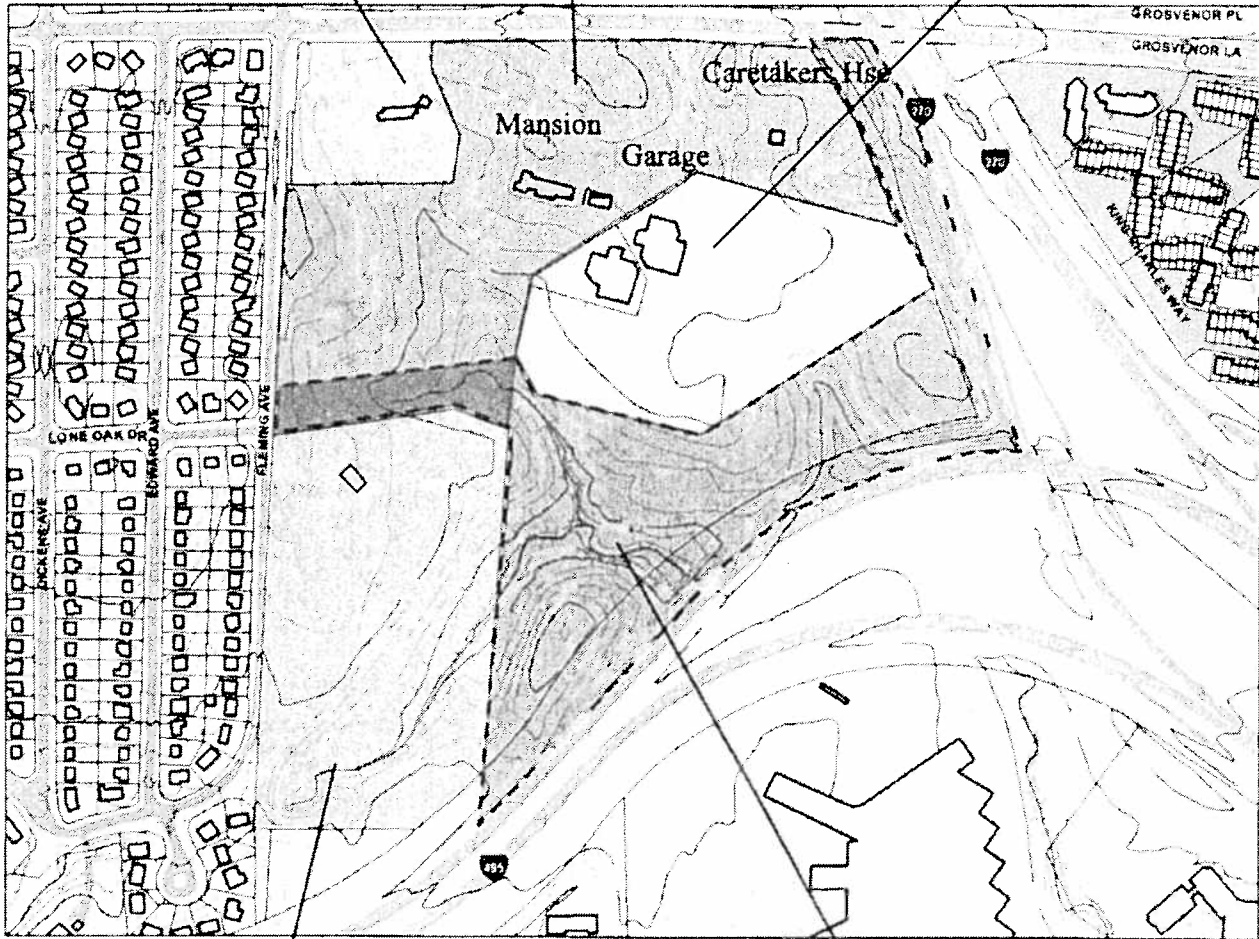


WILD ACRES, 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda

Wild Acres:
Historic Resource/
Environmental
Setting

1951 Grosvenor House

Office Buildings



Fleming Local Park

Legacy Open Space land



en kept their word, and such was their promise later established Yellowstone as the first park of anybody today who seriously questions the decision. Further, each succeeding Congress has strengthened the concept proclaimed

to the first national park right away. Yellowstone Congress created more parks. Sequoia, and came into the new system of "pleasuring" in, before the turn of the century. The year 1862. It permits Presidents to make national parks of interesting places by simple proclamation. It even the Nation about half its National Park system to protect the Indian ruins of the Southwest. It is a bureau of the Department of the Interior that had been running the parks as a sort of extra-legal agency. 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 horax 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.

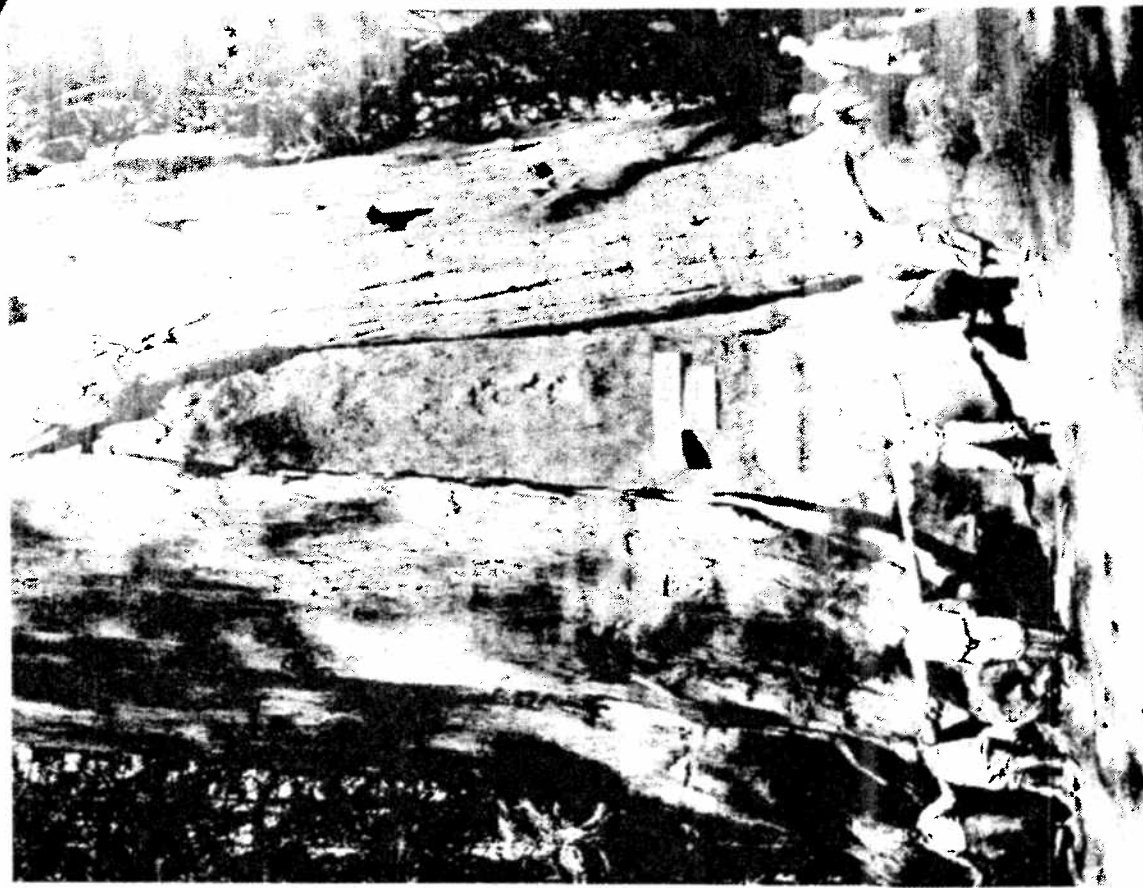
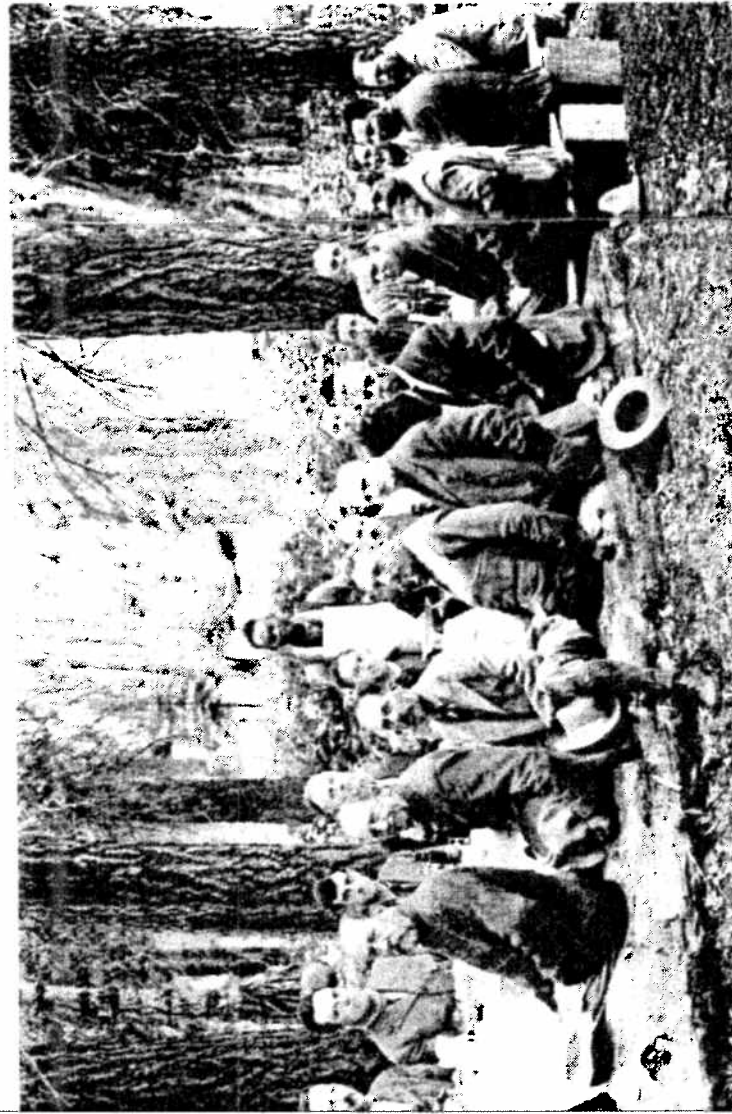
In 1915 Dr. Grosvenor went on a camping trip. Mather arranged in California's Sierra Nevada for some influential people he hoped would help sell his park ideas. Mather and Grosvenor, scoring tents, spread their blankets on the forest floor beneath a giant tree and talked probably half the night about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

and Geographical Society to help the Park Service acquire this magnificent monument sequoias.

In 1958, the Society gave the American people Russell Cave in Alabama, the Smithsonian Institution excavated Indian homesites 9,000 years old, 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 ago, and the time he built villages in the Southwest, about the beginning of Christian Era.

In 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt consolidated under our care a host of national monuments, military parks, memorials, and cemeteries, many 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 the Secretary 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



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 142-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*.

9800 Broad Street
Bethesda, MD 20814
9806 Broad St.
Bethesda, MD 20814

RECEIVED

JUN 12 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

June 10, 2008

Royce Hanson
Chairman
Planning Board
Maryland National Capitol Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue,
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Hanson

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the hearing held on May 29 about the historic designation of Wild Acres. There were several inaccuracies in the testimony presented. The owners stated that the historical parts of the property have been compromised. This is not so. First, the aerial photograph from 1951 (Attachment A) of the Grosvenor Mansion indicates that the north, east, and south views from the mansion portions are identical to what they were when the Mansion was occupied by the Grosvenor's. There are three stands of woods that have grown since the 1950's. Further, the same photograph, demonstrates that the circular driveway is located where it was when the Grosvenor's lived there in 1951. This Mansion is very typical of the many suburban estates located on Rockville Pike before the Beltway and Route 270 were built. There is another one on the grounds of NIH. Enabling our children and grandchildren to see what this part of Montgomery County used to look like would be a wonderful historical gift for them. The preservation of the Mansion protects an invaluable perspective on our past and a means to appreciate to the architecture and aesthetics of the 1920s.

That map clearly shows that the same trees provided quite a buffer to what is now Fleming Avenue. There were also many trees on Grosvenor Lane.

The Mansion, driveway, and woods remain essentially the same. There was some discussion about the view from the mansion but it is much as it was in the days of the Grosvenor's, as it was a wooded view.

I walk my dog to Fleming Park every day and am amazed at its rich variety of animals and birds. The wildlife includes deer, foxes, and coyotes.

We understand that there are some invasive plants in the woods. Those are the fault of the current owners. It seems ironic that the American Foresters would allow such plants to take over a wonderful forest. They can easily be removed and the forest can be restored to health once that occurs.

At the hearing, someone mentioned the office buildings distracting from the property. That is not the case as those buildings are off to the side and the parking lot is sunken so you really cannot see it.

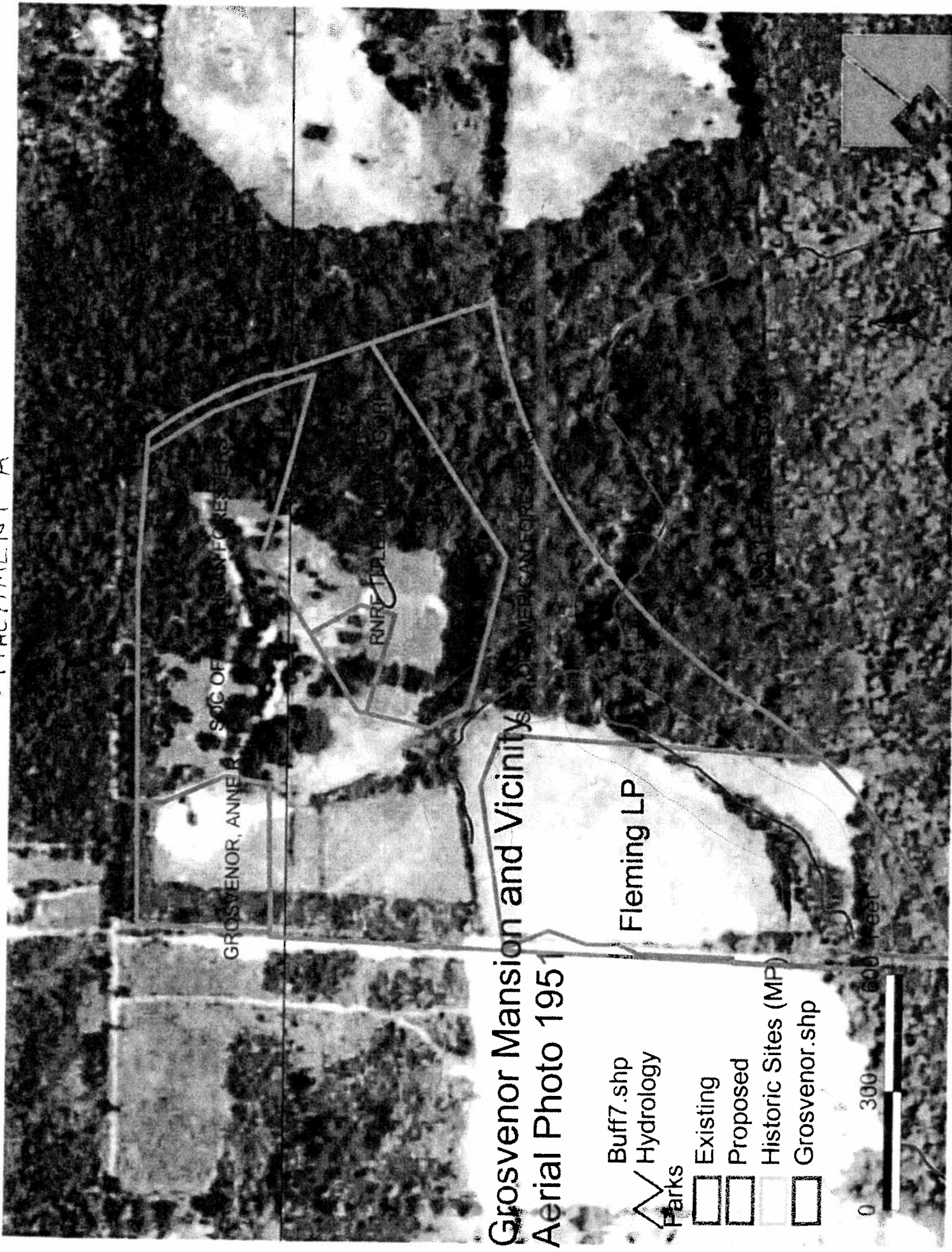
Thank you for considering these points.

Sincerely,

Joan Hurley

Arlene Polangin

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arlene K. Polangin". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the printed name.



Grosvenor Mansion and Vicinity
Aerial Photo 1951

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



5908 Grosvenor Lane
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
June 11, 2008

Royce Hanson, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20810

RECEIVED

JUN 12 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Hanson:

I am writing to respond to testimony and discussion at the Planning Board's May 29 hearing on the nomination of Wild Acres, the former estate of Gilbert Grosvenor of the National Geographic Society, to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

I also am writing to express my strong support for the nomination and my strong support for including the mansion, the carriage house/garage, the caretaker's house/gardener's cottage, and the full environmental setting shown in the April 16 and May 22 M-NCPPC staff memorandums recommending designation of Wild Acres on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, including the historic approach and vistas north and south of the mansion.

At the May 29 hearing, the current owners claimed that the property has changed so dramatically since Gilbert Grosvenor lived there that they question whether he would recognize it today. (He died in 1966.) They showed carefully selected photographs -- for example, an early photo showing few trees behind the mansion, a recent photo angled to emphasize the two modern buildings constructed southeast of the mansion and garage -- to try to make their case.

Gilbert Grosvenor certainly would recognize Wild Acres today. Wild Acres was nominated as a country/suburban estate, not as a farm -- and it still looks largely the way it looked as a country/suburban estate when he lived there. The three historic buildings have retained their integrity, as documented by historic and current photographs submitted with the nomination. The recommended environmental setting also has retained its integrity.

The enclosed 1951 and 2008 aerial photographs of the property document that the recommended environmental setting has changed relatively little since 1951. The vistas north and south from the mansion (which has two fronts) are very similar in the two photographs. In 1951, there were woods at the north of the property along Grosvenor Lane; these woods are still there. The wooded approach from Grosvenor Lane to the mansion is very similar in the two photos. (We understand that the place where the approach drive meets Grosvenor Lane had to be moved a little to the west when I-270 was built.) In 1951, there were woods at the east and south of the property; these woods are still there. In 1951, there was a wooded area at the west along what is now Fleming Avenue; these woods are still there. The enclosed 1928 photo of the laying of the mansion's cornerstone shows extensive wooded areas nearby, and Gilbert Grosvenor planted a number of additional trees. What appears to be the largest non-wooded area in the 1951 photo is now Fleming Park. In some parts of the property, invasive plants have grown during the past three decades, but these invasives can be removed.

The two modern buildings and parking lots to the southeast of the mansion and garage are not in the part of the property nominated for the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and do not affect the setting recommended for designation, including the approach and the views north and south of the mansion.

Questions were raised at the May 29 hearing about whether Wild Acres should be designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, and if so, which building(s) and what setting should be included.

Wild Acres clearly meets requirements for inclusion on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The April and May staff memorandums make clear that Wild Acres meets six of the nine criteria for inclusion (to qualify, only one criterion needs to be met). As the nomination and the staff memorandums document, Wild Acres has historic, architectural, environmental setting, and landscape significance. In April 2008, the Historic Preservation Commission unanimously recommended designation of Wild Acres on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. At the May 29 hearing, the HPC member who presented this recommendation said that Wild Acres is one of the finest resources they have seen and that this recommendation was “an easy one.” It also is significant that in 2000, the Maryland Historical Trust determined that Wild Acres is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

As noted, Wild Acres is nominated as a country/suburban estate – not as a farm, and not just as a mansion, or as a mansion, garage, and small area of grass (it was called Wild Acres, after all).

Gilbert Grosvenor planned his estate as a unified whole, including the forested approach, the three historic buildings and their locations in the surrounding landscape, and the north and south vistas from (and to) the mansion. With its unified plan, Wild Acres exemplifies the country/suburban estate period in Montgomery County in the 1920s and the following decades. The three buildings and the full environmental setting (shown in the enclosed diagram from staff’s May 22 memorandum) are integral components of Wild Acres and essential to convey the estate’s historic semi-rural, suburban character. These buildings and the full recommended environmental setting have retained their integrity and should be included to convey the previous use of the property as a country/suburban estate. (In addition, M-NCPPC staff told me that Grosvenor Lane is a green corridor, so preservation of the woods along Grosvenor Lane is consistent with this as well as with the historic context.)

During the May 29 meeting, motivation of community residents regarding this historic preservation nomination was questioned – unfairly, I believe. We only recently became aware of the county’s historic preservation process, and Wild Acres clearly meets the requirements for inclusion in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. It is reasonable to want the historic significance of this cherished neighborhood landmark to be recognized and to want development to be consistent and compatible with Wild Acres’ historic significance and character.

We understand that the current owners want to use decisions made about thirty years ago – when Montgomery County did not appreciate the importance and value of Wild Acres – to prevent or

Page 3 – Royce Hanson

significantly limit consideration of the property now. We understand that one of the current owners, the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation, nominated the property for historic preservation in 1980, shortly after it became eligible, and then opposed the nomination, which was rejected. (We also understand that the approval for full development of the property by the current owners under a special exception granted to RNRF in 1973 would allow more intrusive development, but this full development is very unlikely, and the owners clearly intend to sell the property.) As M-NCPPC staff made clear, since 1980 there has been new research on country estates in Montgomery County, the architect (Arthur Heaton), and Bethesda and Rockville history. There now is increased appreciation of the regional and national importance of Gilbert Grosvenor, of Arthur Heaton, and of the country estate period in the county. Most of these estates are now lost, making historic preservation status for Wild Acres even more important. We now have the perspective of time and the benefit of this additional research. It would not be reasonable to conclude that historic designation cannot be reconsidered based on new research and the passage and perspective of time – or to conclude that a mistaken decision made just after the property became eligible (and for which some documentation apparently has been lost) must be the only decision the county can make about the historic status of this property.

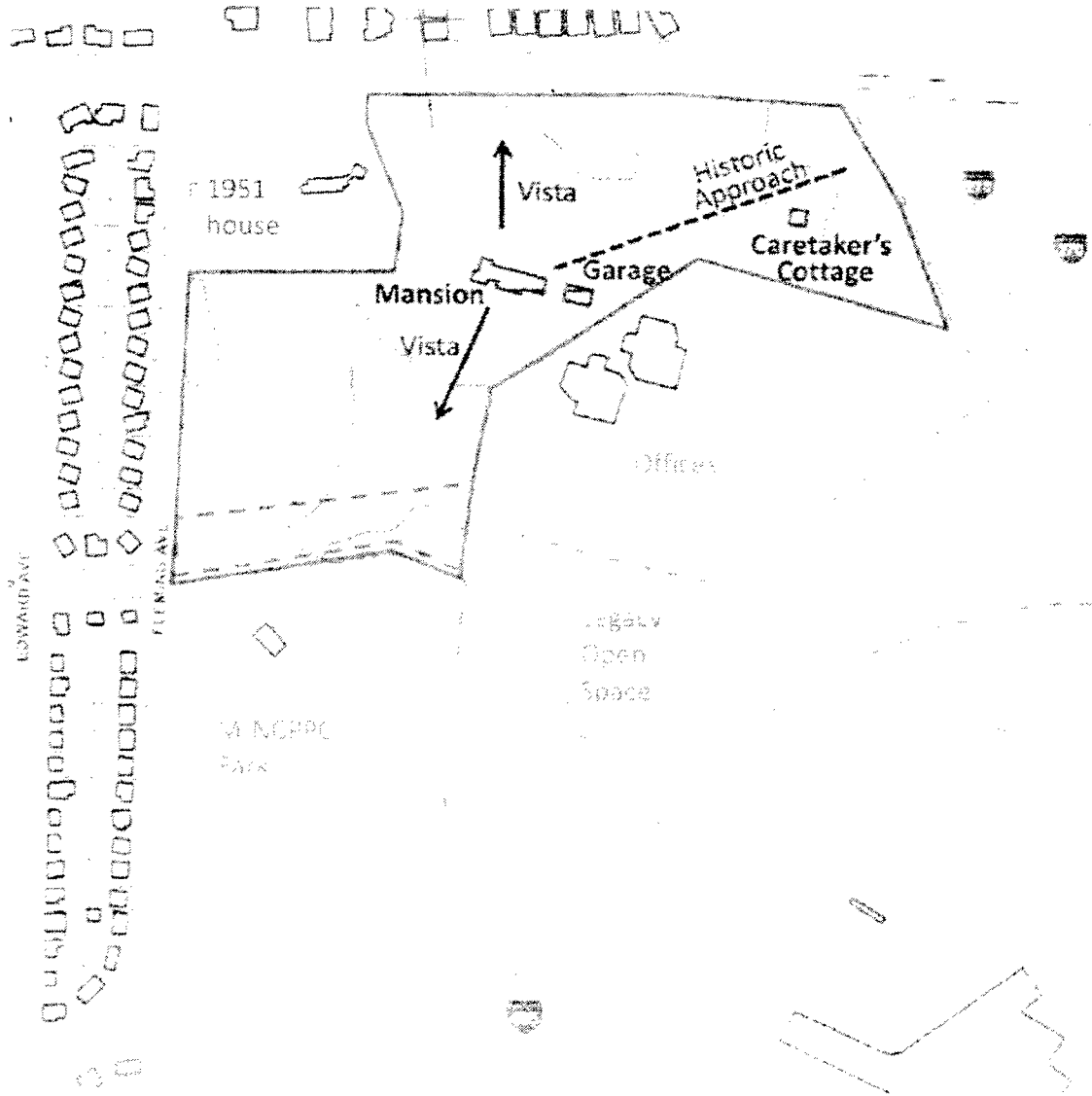
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Bowker".

Ann Bowker

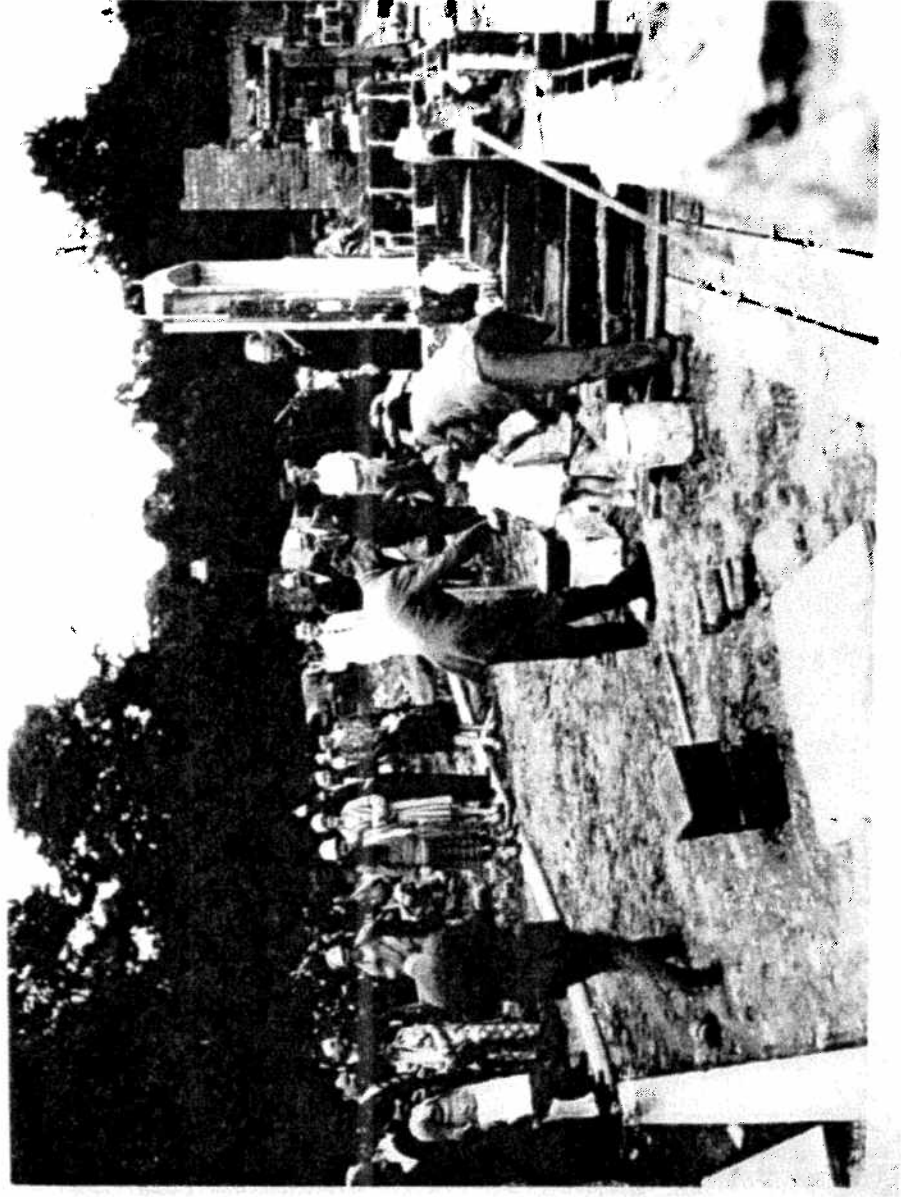
Enclosures (4)

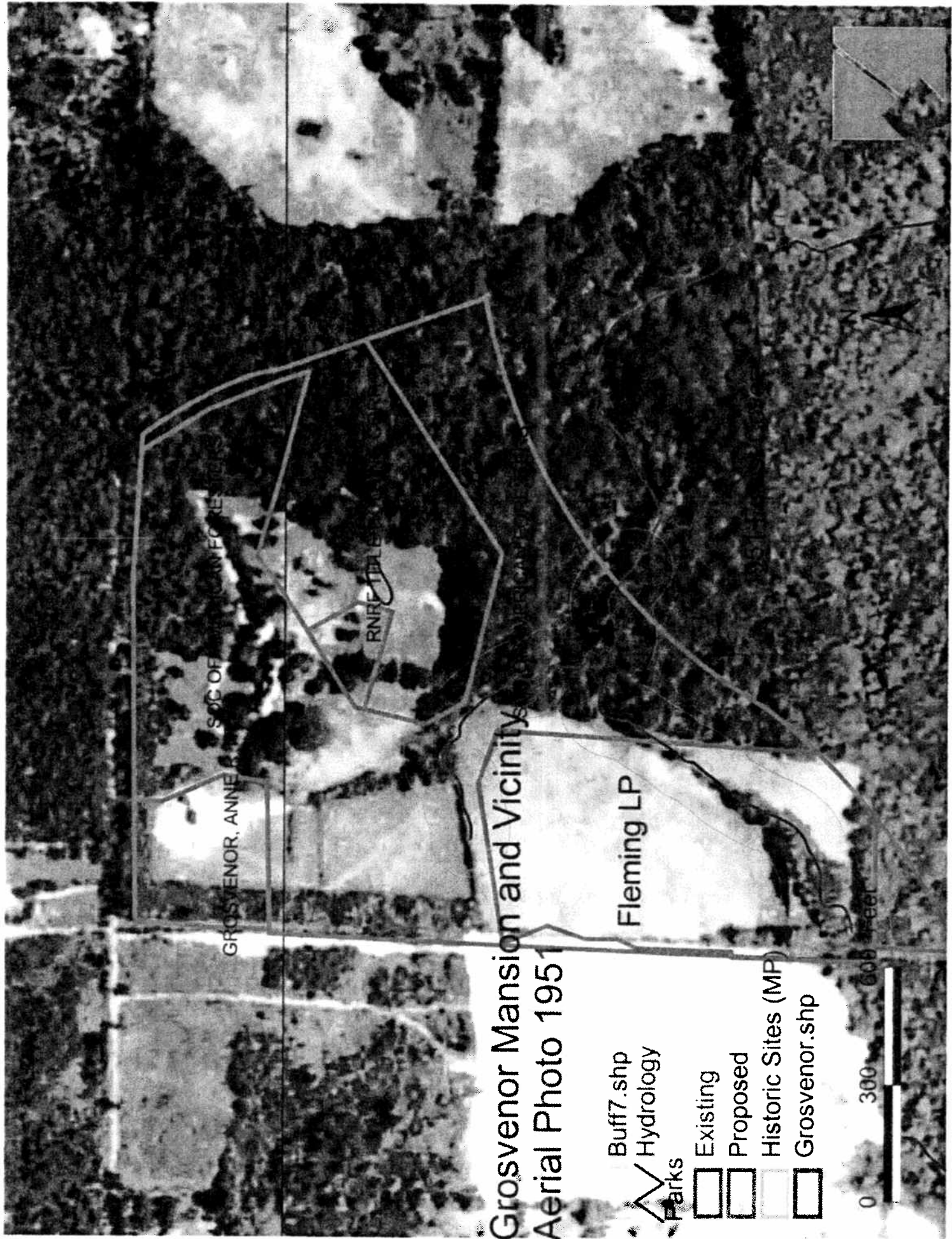
MAP OF THE PROPERTY










BY THE ARCHITECTS

Granddaughter Helen Grosvenor laying cornerstone 1928

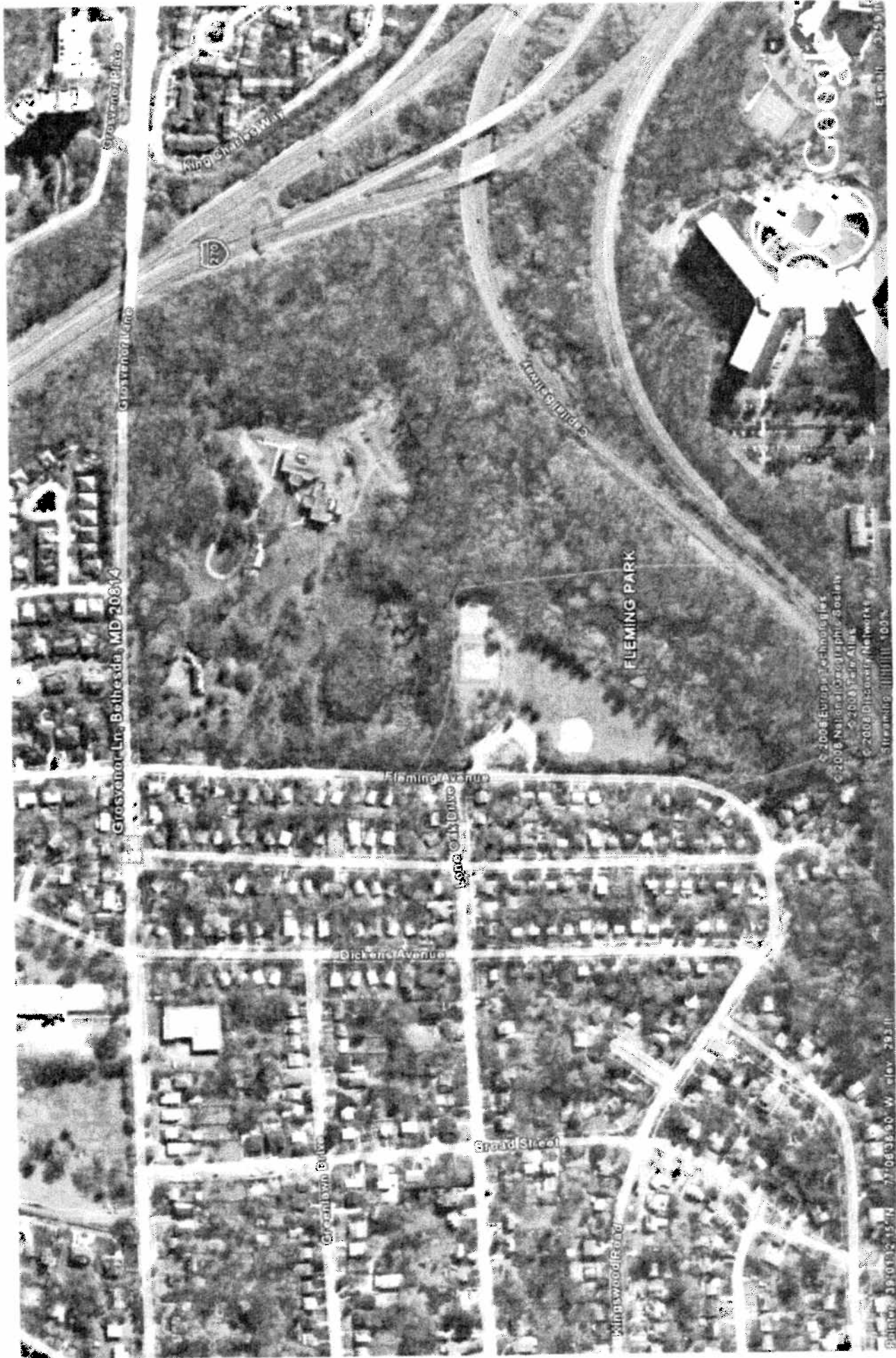




Grosvenor Mansion and Vicinity Aerial Photo 1951

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





Grosvenor Ln, Bethesda, MD 20814

FLEMING PARK

© 2008 Europa Technologies
© 2008 National Geographic Society
© 2008 Terra Atlas
© 2008 Discovery Network
Streaming 100%

39°01'21.15"N 77°03'36.90"W elev 293 ft

June 7, 2008

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

Re: Wild Acres Historic Designation

Dear Mr. Hanson,

I am a homeowner living on Grosvenor Lane in Bethesda. My family has lived in the area for several generations. In fact, my grandfather (Maurice Leahy) came from Ireland in the early 1900's and made his way to Bethesda where he was employed by Mr. Grosvenor as the head caretaker for the entire Grosvenor Estate. He lived with his wife and eight children in the caretaker's cottage on the property for many years.

My father, Ed Leahy, was born in that house and raised there until he joined the Army to fight in World War II. His father died while he was at war and when he returned to Bethesda he built a small cottage on Grosvenor Lane. At that time Grosvenor was a dirt road. He, in turn, raised his family there and before his death he was very proud of the fact that he lived on Grosvenor Lane his entire life! After college I, in turn, purchased a home on Grosvenor Lane and I'm now proud to say I have lived my entire life on Grosvenor Lane as well!

My father told many stories of growing up on that property, the most memorable that of shining Alexander Graham Bell's shoes for a penny. Mr. Bell would come to visit his daughter and son-in-law and it always caused great excitement among the kids. Many people passed through there in the course of Ed's childhood, but Alexander Graham Bell was truly the biggest thrill of them all. I guess it would be akin to one of my children meeting the man who invented the iPod!

Ed also spoke of Gilbert Grosvenor and his love of birds. As a young boy Ed was throwing rocks at birds on the property (as young boys do) and was caught red-handed by Mr. Grosvenor. The next day Mr. Grosvenor appeared with a book about birds for Ed. The gesture touched my father, the eighth child of an Irish

-- 2 --

immigrant who had few resources and certainly no books! It instilled a life-long love of birds in my father and even in his dying days he was concerned with feeding the birds in his yard.

I understand there are many reasons the property qualifies for historic designation according to Montgomery County Code, but I hope the board looks beyond the "code" to the rich social history of the land and structures on the property. Montgomery County has a unique opportunity to preserve a piece of history. Once the opportunity passes it is gone forever. The buildings and the environmental setting are important to the Bethesda Community. For this reason I encourage you to designate Wild Acres as a historic property.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Debra Leahy O'Reagan".

Debra Leahy O'Reagan
5808 Grosvenor Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814

RECEIVED
JUN 12 2008

June 11, 2008

VICE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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

Dear Mr. Hanson,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the testimony presented at the Planning Board's May 29 hearing.

Once again I urge the Board to accept the unanimous recommendation of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission to add Wild Acres to the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Wild Acres was nominated as a suburban/country estate, which is what it was when Gilbert Grosvenor died in 1966. Therefore, the three buildings—the mansion, caretaker's cottage, and carriage house—and the complete environmental setting (see attachment 1) should be added to the historic master plan, as recommended by staff. All these elements are necessary to convey a historically accurate impression of the property as it was when Gilbert Grosvenor and his wife lived there.

Sadly, I was unable to attend the May 29 planning board hearing because of work-related obligations, but I did view the hearing on the Web. I would like to address what I believe to be inaccurate assertions made by the current property owners.

The owners asserted that the property's historical value has been compromised and that the Grosvenors would not recognize it now. In fact, far from being compromised, the elements of the property that were nominated are remarkably intact!

- The Tudor-style design of the mansion and carriage house and the Craftsman cottage, all conceived by the distinguished architect Arthur Heaton, remain largely as they were when Wild Acres was built in the 1920s. The architectural drawings and photos of these buildings submitted by the nominator show this unequivocally.
- A comparison of a 1951 aerial photo (attachment 2) of the property and a 2008 aerial photo (attachment 3) clearly shows that the wooded areas to the north, east, and south have changed little since the Grosvenors lived there.
- In addition, the 1951 photo shows that when the Grosvenors lived at Wild Acres, a thick border of woods ran along the western perimeter—what is now Fleming Avenue. In fact, a close look at both photos shows that the same stand still exists. The line of demarcation is clearly visible in the 2008 photo!
- A comparison of the 1951 and 2008 photos also shows that the view from the mansion north to woods along Grosvenor Lane and the view from the mansion

south past the lawn to the woods beyond are much the same. The photos also show that clusters of trees around the carriage house and the mansion existed when the Grosvenors lived there.

- Moreover, the two photos show that the thickly wooded approach to the buildings of Wild Acres has changed hardly at all since the Grosvenors' time. The only part of the approach that appears to be different is the place where the driveway meets Grosvenor Lane. Apparently it was moved slightly to the west when I-270 was constructed. Otherwise, as seen in the two photos, the approach through the woods and the circular drive in front of the mansion look to be the same.

The current owners also asserted that the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation buildings and parking lot compromise the historical value of the property. I do not agree. The two RNR buildings are clustered together and are off to one side in a fairly confined area. The parking lot was built in a depression and so is not visible from the mansion. Furthermore, this portion of the property is not even part of the nomination and therefore, in my view, shouldn't be part of the discussion!

The 1951 photo shows an open area to the southwest, what is now Fleming Park. It also shows an open area directly north of the park. This open area now contains new stands of trees, which isn't unexpected as property does change over time! But there are also areas of invasive underbrush—which is due to neglect by the current owners. These areas, along with the pond (which still exists), could be restored. The invasives occur in fairly concentrated sections and could be removed and controlled. The Nature Conservancy has proven methods for removing and controlling invasives, as demonstrated by its successful clean-up of the Potomac Gorge.

A few additional comments:

- It was mentioned that the noise from I-270 and I-495 detracts from the nominated environmental setting. It is my understanding that the Strathmore Hall property received historical designation and one can certainly hear traffic noise from Rockville Pike on that property. And then there's Mt. Vernon—visitors hear the jets from National Airport every few minutes!
- As an example of how Gilbert Grosvenor wouldn't recognize the property, the current owners mentioned that the birds that Grosvenor loved are no longer there. Untrue. People who live on the streets adjacent to Wild Acres and who visit Fleming Park can see—and hear—many varieties of birds on the property. In fact, a recent bird survey, conducted during the middle of the day (hardly prime bird-watching time), spotted 26 species of birds in only one hour. In addition, the property owners themselves recognized the vibrant birdlife of Wild Acres and set up myriad birdfeeders and established nature trails.
- The owners complained about trespassing. For many years, those of us who live in the neighborhood felt welcome to enter the grounds, watch birds, visit the pond, explore the trails, and view the specimen trees. We were even given a pamphlet, prepared by the Society of American Foresters, that provided a guide.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that I find it amazing that the structures, views, and woods of Wild Acres have remained so well preserved. In fact, I was surprised that the property was not already on a historic register.

Even after all these years, Wild Acres still evokes the country mansion era of the 1920s and the following decades, as well as the spirit of the distinguished man who once lived there. The three buildings and the entire environmental setting unanimously recommended for approval by the Historic Preservation Commission deserve to be protected in a way that reflects how Gilbert and Elsie May Bell Grosvenor planned and used their country estate.

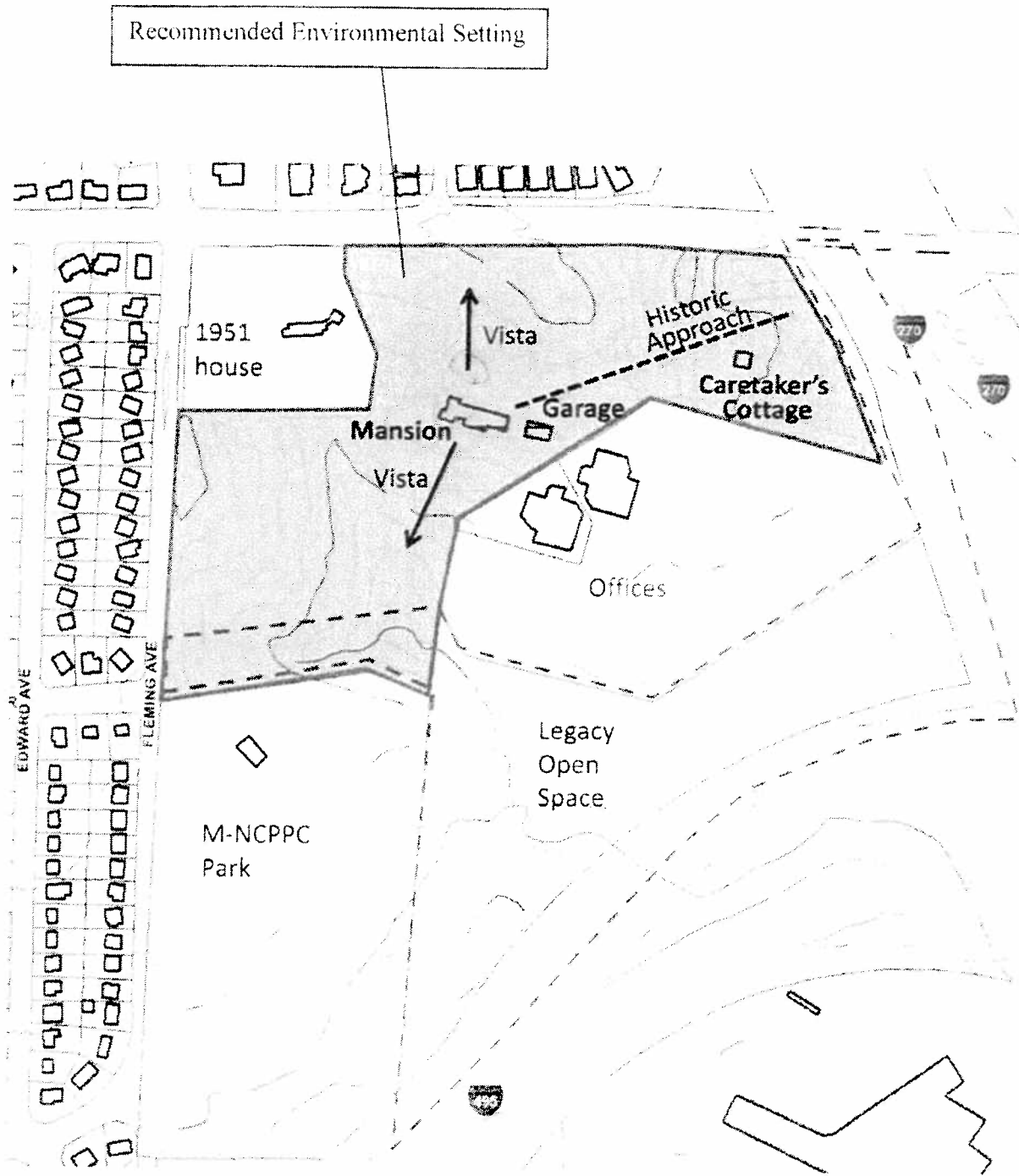
Thank you for this opportunity to again voice my strong support for preserving this precious historical resource for future generations of Montgomery County residents.



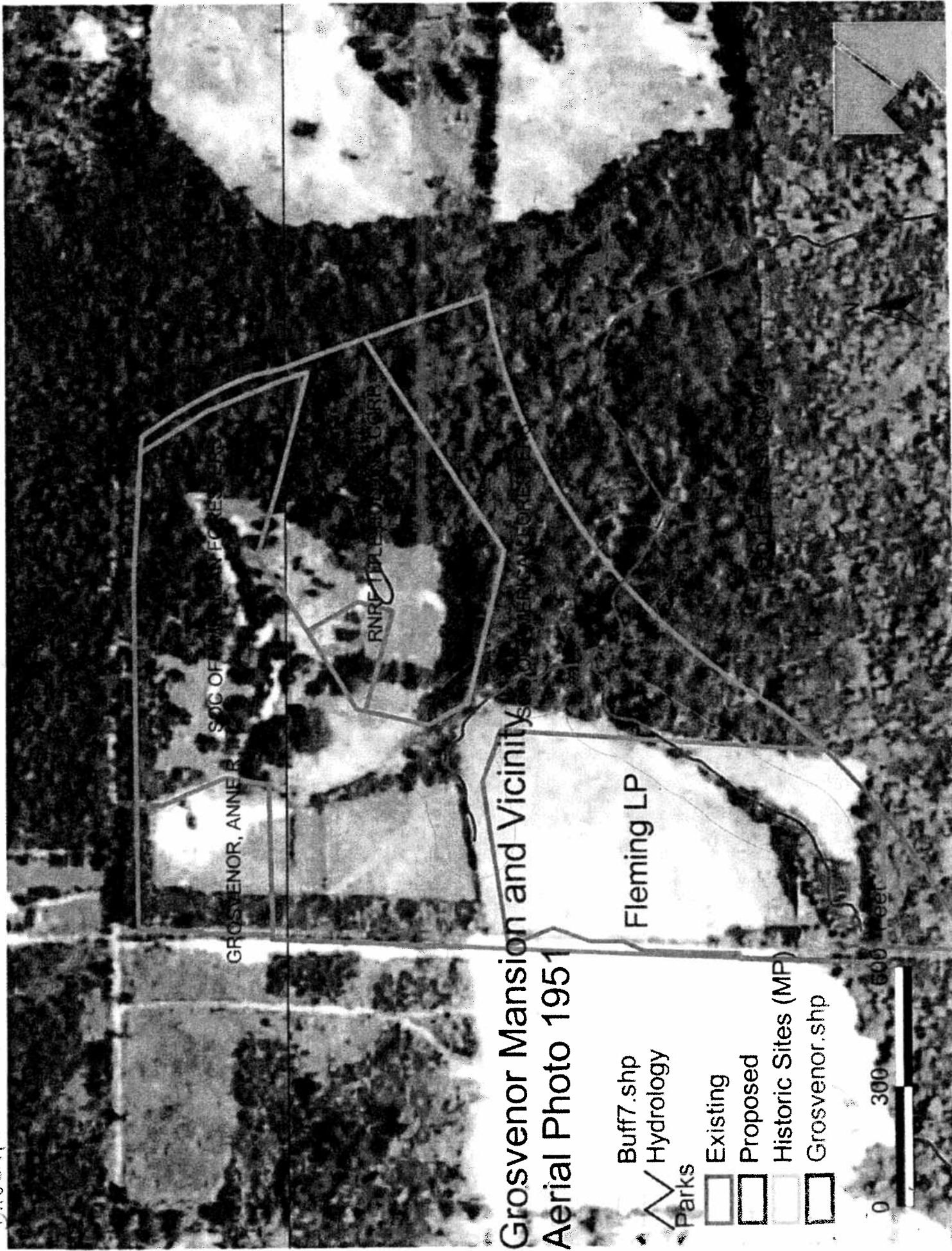
Patricia Davenport
10012 Fleming Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Map showing buildings and environmental setting recommended by M-NCPPC staff
- Attachment 2: 1951 aerial photo of Wild Acres
- Attachment 3: 2008 Google Earth aerial photo of Wild Acres

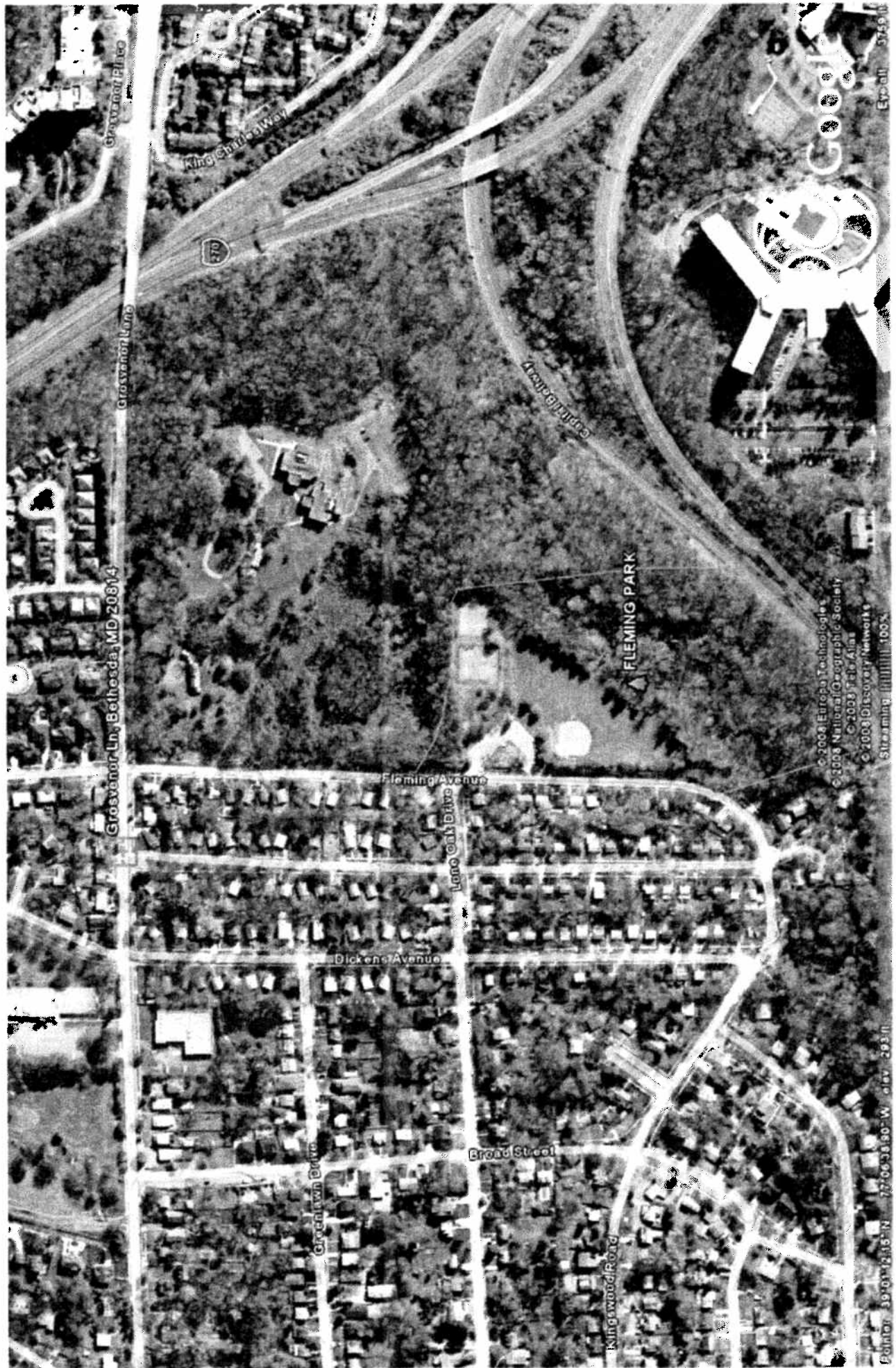


WILD ACRES, 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda



Davenport letter

Attachment 3



RECEIVED

JUN 12 2008

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

June 9, 2008

**Mr. Royce Hanson
Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3716**

Re: Wild Acres Nomination for Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Dear Mr. Hanson:

We attended the meeting of the Planning Board on May 29, 2008 concerning the designation of Wild Acres for Historic Preservation. At that meeting, we heard testimony that stated that Mr. Grosvenor and his family would no longer recognize the property if they visited it today.

Since we are in favor of designating the Grosvenor Estate for historic preservation, we found this testimony alarming. We wish to point out the following:

- 1. The testimony indicated that there were few if any tress at the time. Please refer to the enclosed map, which will show that this is not correct.**
- 2. The view approaching the mansion is essentially the same now as it was then.**
- 3. The invasive species of tress and growth referred to are primarily along the edges. It is our understanding that according to representatives of The Nature Conservancy, these invasive species can be controlled or removed without much difficulty.**
- 4. The entrance to the estate was moved slightly when 270 was built, but basically, except for the new buildings, the property remains much the same.**
- 5. The Grosvenor Estate historically represents what was then a 'country estate.' Mr. Grosvenor planned the estate as a united whole. This includes the mansion, the garage, and the caretaker's cottage.**

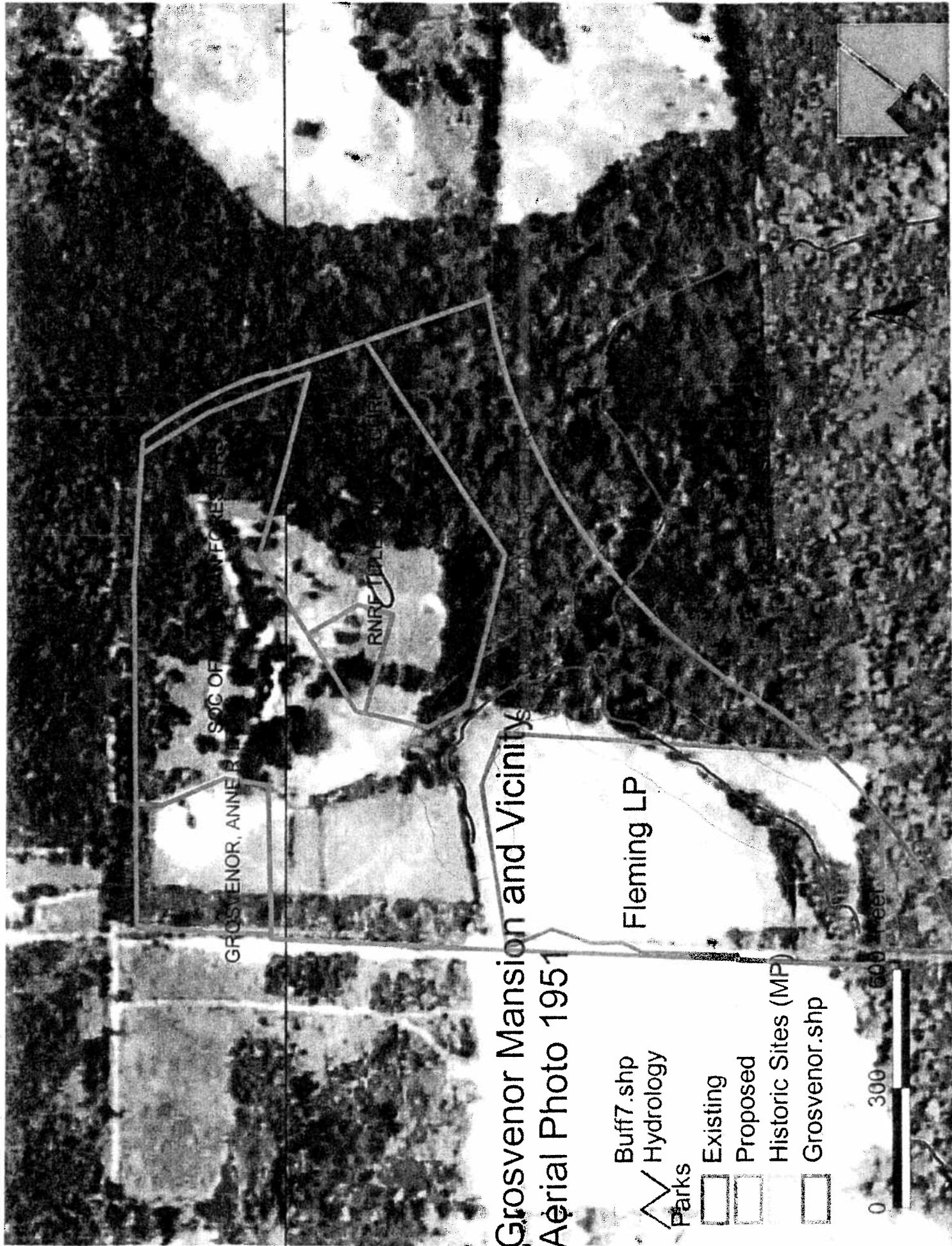
Page 2 – Montgomery County Planning Board

We hope that you will take our comments under consideration when you make your decision.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Robert L. Ingram and Lynda Eckard. The signature of Robert L. Ingram is on the left, and the signature of Lynda Eckard is on the right, both written in cursive.

**Dr. Robert L. Ingram &
Lynda Eckard
5903 Jarvis Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814**



Grosvenor Mansion and Vicinity Aerial Photo 1951

Buff7.shp
Hydrology

Parks

Existing

Proposed

Historic Sites (MP)

Grosvenor.shp

0 300 600 feet



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

Dear Chairman Hanson:

On behalf of the Fleming Park Community Association, I submit these comments on the nomination of Wild Acres to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, on which the Planning Board heard testimony on May 29, 2008.

In particular, I wish to comment on testimony presented at the hearing, in which it was asserted that Wild Acres has changed significantly since the Grosvenors lived there. I believe the evidence shows the contrary.

The mansion, carriage house, and caretaker's quarters remain essentially unchanged, as confirmed by photographs and architectural drawings submitted with the nomination.

The environmental setting is also essentially unchanged. While the current owners testified to the effect that few trees existed on the estate when the Grosvenors lived there, a 1951 aerial photo of Wild Acres (attached) shows large stands of woods, including along what is now Fleming Avenue.

The views to the north and the south from the mansion that were included in the nominated environmental setting are also similar. Looking north from the mansion, the view still includes the sloping drive, stands of trees, and the woods along Grosvenor Lane. Looking from the other side of the house, the view still includes the lawn and the woods beyond.

There was also testimony to the effect that the driveway had changed. In reality, any changes appear minor comparing the 1951 photo and the recent photo. The entrance to the estate seemingly was moved slightly west when I-270 was built, but otherwise, the lane appears to follow the same path to the mansion.

I also disagree with the owners' assertion that office buildings and a parking lot undermine the historical value of the property. In fact, these developments are at some distance and are not located in the area recommended as the environmental setting. In any regard, they are not in the approach or in the southern and northern vistas included in the recommendation.

The attached photograph shows there were some open areas at the western portion of the property in 1951. Part of the area is still open, consisting of Fleming Park, and another portion is now the home of a Grosvenor family member. Other areas that were open now contain stands of trees, although the existence of trees is generally consistent with the overall wooded character of the estate. While the vegetation includes some non-native species, invasives may have existed when the Grosvenors lived on the estate as well. In any event, invasives can be controlled. In fact, members of the Fleming Park Community Association participated in a recent county-sponsored effort to remove invasives from nearby Fleming Park.

Apart from responding to certain testimony offered on May 29, I'd also like to make the affirmative point that, because Wild Acres was nominated as a suburban/country estate, its environmental setting is integral to its character and the Grosvenors' vision. On behalf of the Fleming Park Community Association, I urge the Planning Board to adopt the entire

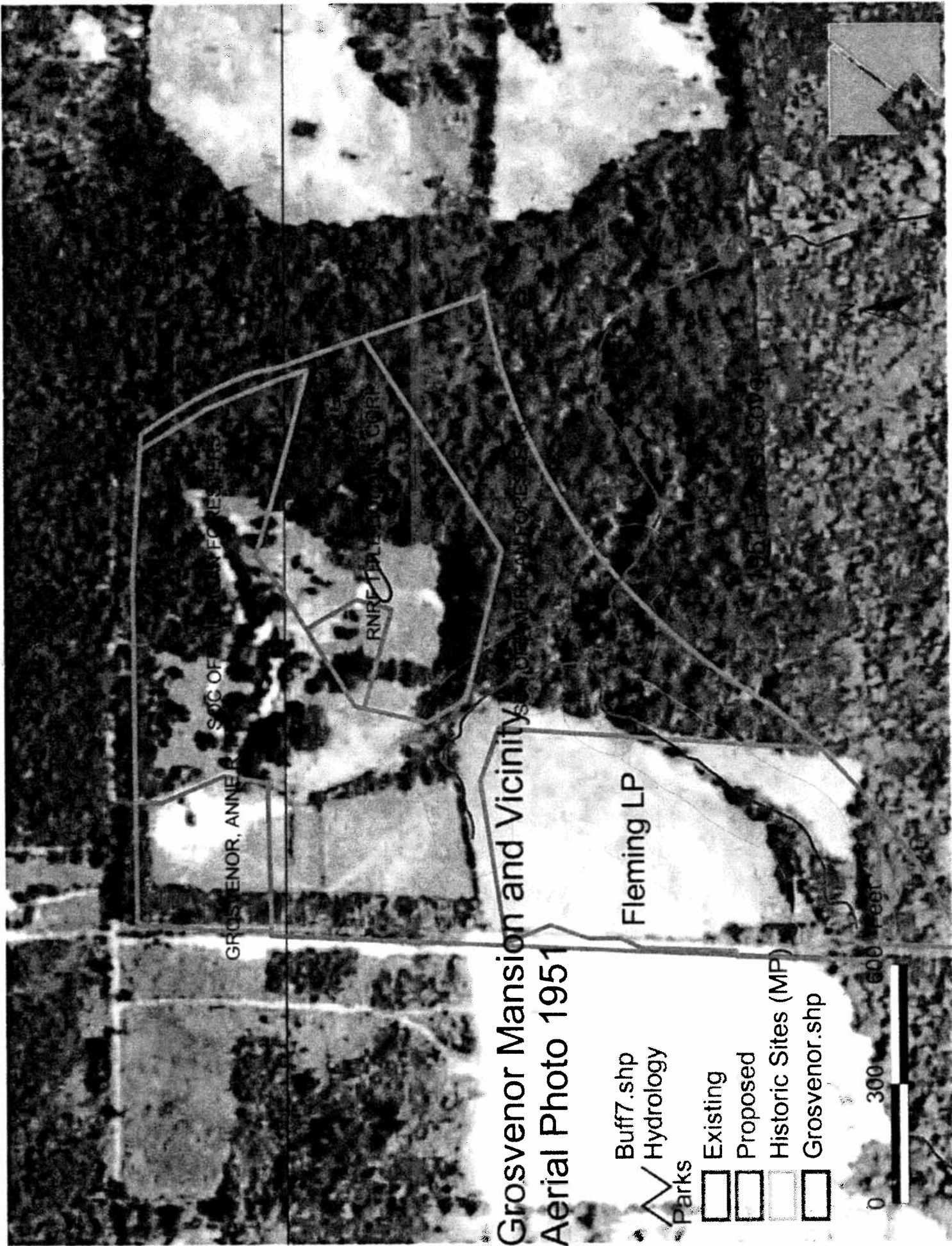
environmental setting recommended in staff's May 22 memorandum, and as recommended by a unanimous vote of the Historic Preservation Board.

Thank you.

Michael Diehl
President, Fleming Park Community Association
9902 Broad Street
Bethesda, Maryland

Attachments to be delivered by hand

Grosvenor Mansion and Vicinity Aerial Photo 1951



Buff7.shp

Hydrology

Parks

Existing

Proposed

Historic Sites (MP)

Grosvenor.shp

0 300 600 Feet



GROSVENOR, ANNE

SOCIETY OF GOLFERS

RNR FIELD HOUSE CORP

Fleming LP



© 2004 Europa Technologies
© 2003 National Geographic Society
© 2003 Terra Allis
© 2003 Discovery Networks
Streaming 100%

Point: 39°51'2.15"N 77°00'35.80"W elev: 293 ft

RECEIVED
JUN 12 2008OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION**Davenport, Pat**

From: Michael Diehl [diehl.mike@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2008 11:55 AM
To: Pat Davenport; Davenport, Pat
Subject: Fwd: Wild Acres Historic Nomination

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Michael Diehl <diehl.mike@gmail.com>
Date: Jun 12, 2008 11:53 AM
Subject: Wild Acres Historic Nomination
To: MCP-Chairman <mcp-chairman@mncppc-mc.org>
Cc: joyce.coleman@mncppc-mc.org

[Note: After I drafted this letter, I was unable to attach the photographs that are mentioned in it. A paper copy of the letter, with attachments, will be delivered by a colleague.]

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

Dear Chairman Hanson:

On behalf of the Fleming Park Community Association, I submit these comments on the nomination of Wild Acres to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, on which the Planning Board heard testimony on May 29, 2008.

In particular, I wish to comment on testimony presented at the hearing, in which it was asserted that Wild Acres has changed significantly since the Grosvenors lived there. I believe the evidence shows the contrary.

The mansion, carriage house, and caretaker's quarters remain essentially unchanged, as confirmed by photographs and architectural drawings submitted with the nomination.

The environmental setting is also essentially unchanged. While the current owners testified to the effect that few trees existed on the estate when the Grosvenors lived there, a 1951 aerial photo of Wild Acres (attached) shows large stands of woods, including along what is now Fleming Avenue.

The viewsapes to the north and the south from the mansion that were included in the nominated environmental setting are also similar. Looking north from the mansion, the view still includes the slooping drive, stands of trees, and the woods along Grosvenor Lane. Looking from the other side of the house, the view still includes the lawn and the woods beyond.

There was also testimony to the effect that the driveway had changed. In reality, any changes appear minor comparing the 1951 photo and the recent photo. The entrance to the estate seemingly was moved slightly west when I-270 was built, but otherwise, the lane appears to follow the same path to the mansion.

6/12/2008

10425 Snow Point Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
June 10, 2008

RECEIVED
0641
JUN 12 2008

IN FACE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Royce Hanson, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20810

Dear Chairman Hanson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment following the Planning Board's May 29 hearing on the nomination of Wild Acres, Gilbert Grosvenor's former estate, to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. I am writing on behalf of the Wildwood Manor Citizens Association, which represents 600 homes located just north and northwest of Wild Acres.

Wild Acres is a significant property, with historic, architectural, environmental setting, and landscape significance for Montgomery County and for our neighborhood. We continue to urge the Planning Board to support the unanimous recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission to designate Wild Acres on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. We continue to urge the Planning Board to include in its recommendation the mansion, carriage house/garage, caretaker's house, and the entire environmental setting included in the April 16 and May 22 Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff memorandums recommending designation of Wild Acres on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. (A map from the May 22 memorandum is enclosed, showing the recommended buildings and environmental setting.)

Wild Acres unquestionably meets the requirements for inclusion on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The M-NCPPC staff memorandums make clear that the property meets six of the nine criteria for inclusion (only one criterion must be met to qualify). At the May 29 hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission member who presented the Commission's unanimous recommendation said that Wild Acres is "very special," one of the finest resources they have seen, and that recommending its designation was "an easy one" and "a no-brainer for us." The Maryland Historical Trust determined in 2000 that Wild Acres is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

At the May 29 hearing, representatives of current owners of the property claimed that the property has changed dramatically since Gilbert Grosvenor lived there and questioned whether he would recognize it now.

Wild Acres was nominated as a country/suburban estate - not as a farm. It still looks largely the way it looked - as a country/suburban estate - when Gilbert Grosvenor lived there. The three buildings and their recommended environmental setting have retained their integrity. Gilbert Grosvenor clearly would recognize the property today.

Photographs submitted with the historic preservation nomination document that the mansion, carriage house/garage, and caretaker's house look essentially as they did when Gilbert Grosvenor lived at Wild Acres. (He died in 1966.)

Comparison of the enclosed 1951 and 2008 aerial photographs of the property shows that there has been little change since 1951 in the recommended environmental setting. The views north and south from (and toward) the mansion are very similar in the two photographs. (The mansion has two fronts.) There were woods along Grosvenor Lane, along the approach and between the buildings and Grosvenor Lane, in 1951; they are still there now. The wooded approach is very similar (apparently the place where the approach drive meets Grosvenor Lane had to be moved a little to the west when I-270 was constructed). There were woods at the east and south of the property in 1951; they are still there now. There was a wooded area at the west in 1951; it is still there now.

There now are alien invasive plants in some parts of the property, due to neglect by the current owners, but these can be removed. There now are two modern buildings and parking lots to the southeast of the mansion and garage, but they are not in the part of the property nominated for the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and do not affect the approach and the views north and south of the mansion – the setting recommended for designation.

The mansion, carriage house/garage, and caretaker's house, as well as their environmental setting and context, have retained their integrity and should be preserved to convey that Wild Acres was a country/suburban estate, not just a house (or a house and a garage). The structures and setting of Wild Acres were planned as a unified whole by Gilbert Grosvenor. The three buildings were carefully located in the surrounding landscape, including the approach and the north and south vistas.

We do not oppose all development on the Grosvenor property. We strongly believe, however, that development on the property must be consistent with its historic significance and must be respectful of the property. Including the mansion, carriage house/garage, caretaker's house, and the recommended environmental setting in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation will help to assure preservation and compatible development of this valuable – and valued – landmark in our community.

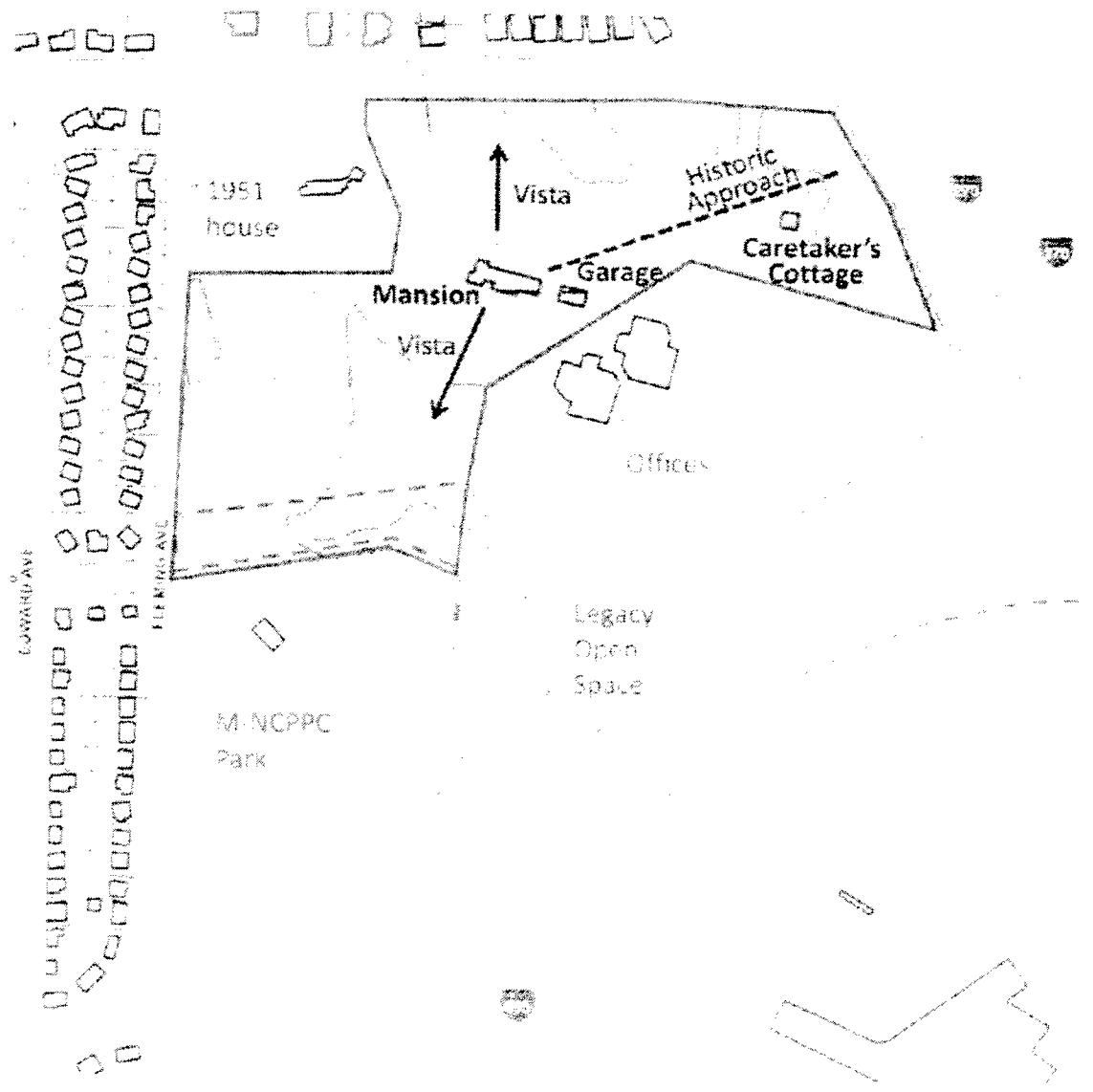
Sincerely,



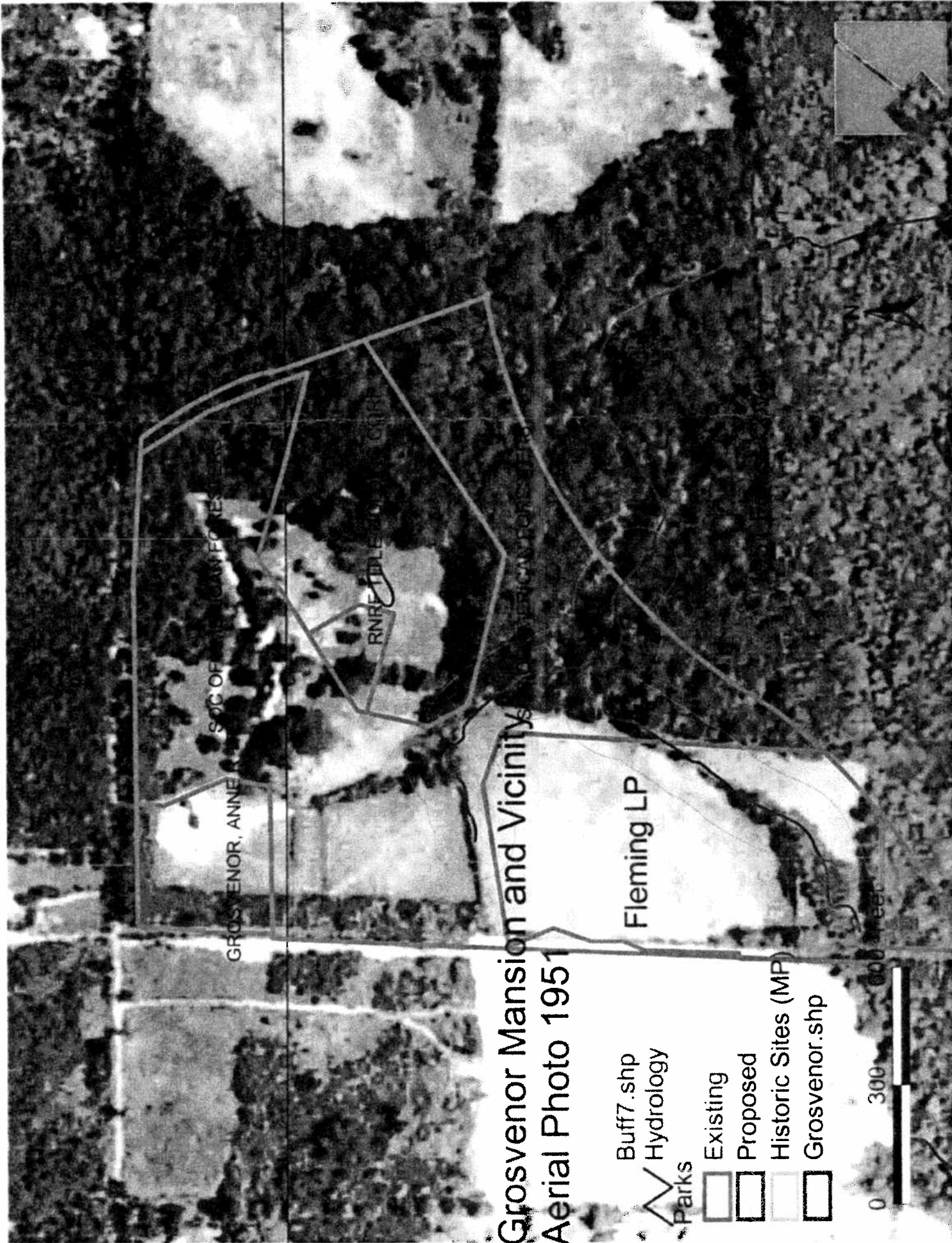
Cheryl Leahy, President
Wildwood Manor Citizens Association

Enclosures (3)

Recommended Environmental Setting



WILD ACRES, 1400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda



Grosvenor Mansion and Vicinity Aerial Photo 1951

Buff7.shp

Hydrology

Parks

Existing

Proposed

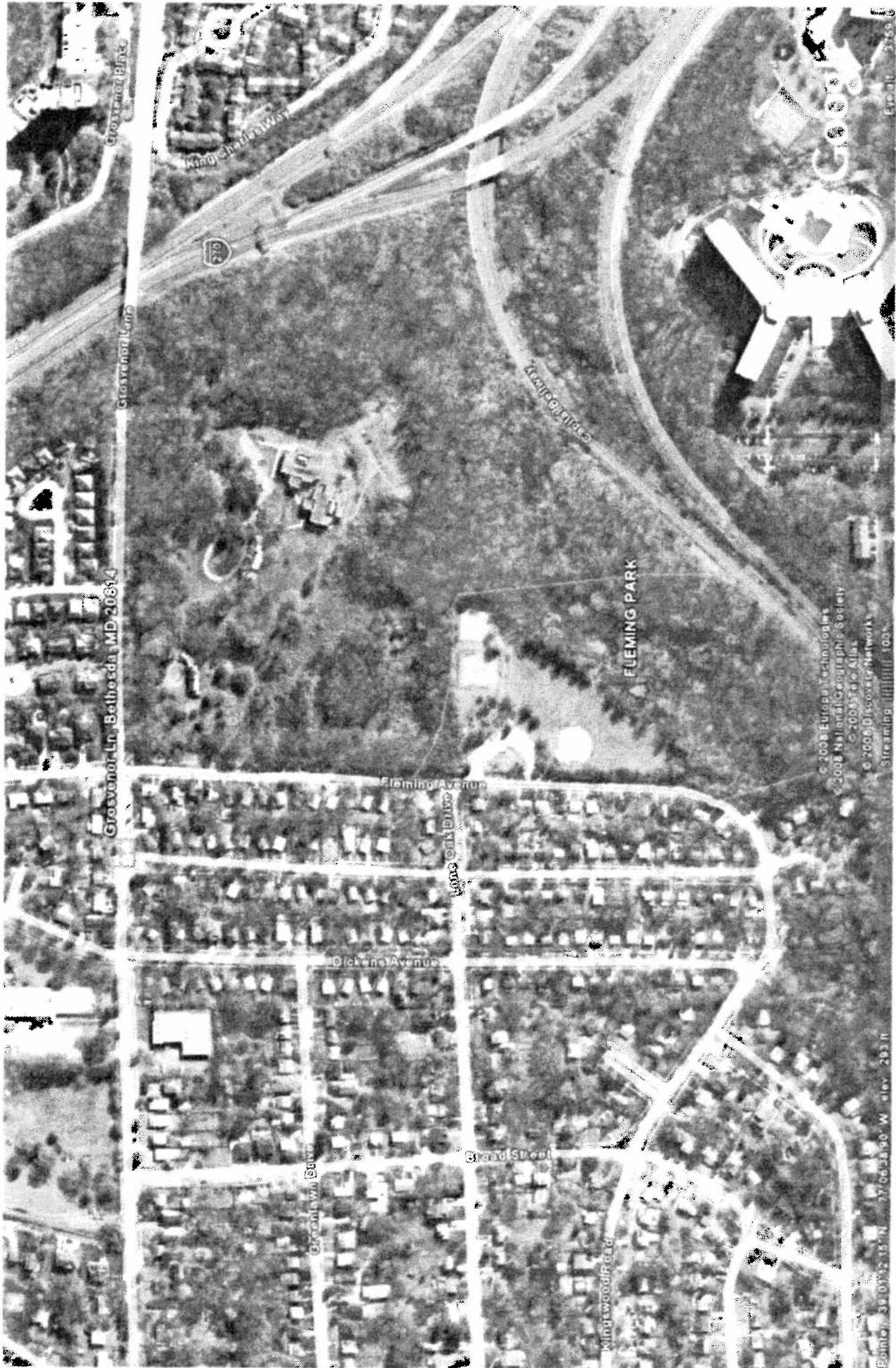
Historic Sites (MP)

Grosvenor.shp

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300

feet



Grosvonor Ln, Bethesda, MD 20814

FLEMING PARK

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Streaming 100%

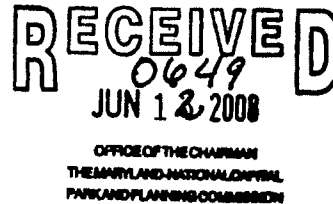
Point: 39°07'12.15"N 77°06'38.90"W Elev: 283 ft

Coleman, Joyce

From: Lisa_Goenner [Lisa_Goenner@london.net]
Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2008 4:55 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Support for Historic Designation of the Grosvenor Mansion and Setting of "Wild Acres"

June 12, 2008

Mr. Royce Hanson, Chairman
Planning Board
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910



Dear Mr. Hanson:

I'm writing to reiterate my very strongest support for the nomination to give historic designation to the buildings and grounds that comprise "Wild Acres." I want to ask for your support, as well, and for your decision *in favor* of preserving the Grosvenor mansion, its carriage house, the caretaker's cottage, and the setting of all three as you begin your work session on this issue.

With every passing year, properties like "Wild Acres" are becoming ever more scarce on the landscape of Montgomery County. In Bethesda, they are rare, indeed. The testimony you have heard, the documentation supporting that testimony, and the scores of letters and emails and petitions signed by county residents, all make an overwhelming case to preserve Gilbert Grosvenor's estate before it is too late.

I hope you will give your full consideration to the many who want to preserve "Wild Acres" for all its significant assets: architectural, cultural, environmental. The unanimous recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission, along with the compelling testimony of the many County residents who value the historic touchstones of our community, are now in your hands.

Please fully support the historic designation of "Wild Acres."

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Goenner

**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.

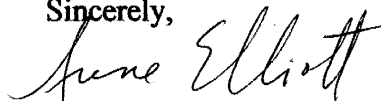
I find it incredibly ironic that we are having to fight to simply put Gilbert Grosvenor's own literal back yard on a historical register where those who wish to preserve our heritage will have a say in how the estate may be managed so to serve all the people, not just those with monetary interests.

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.

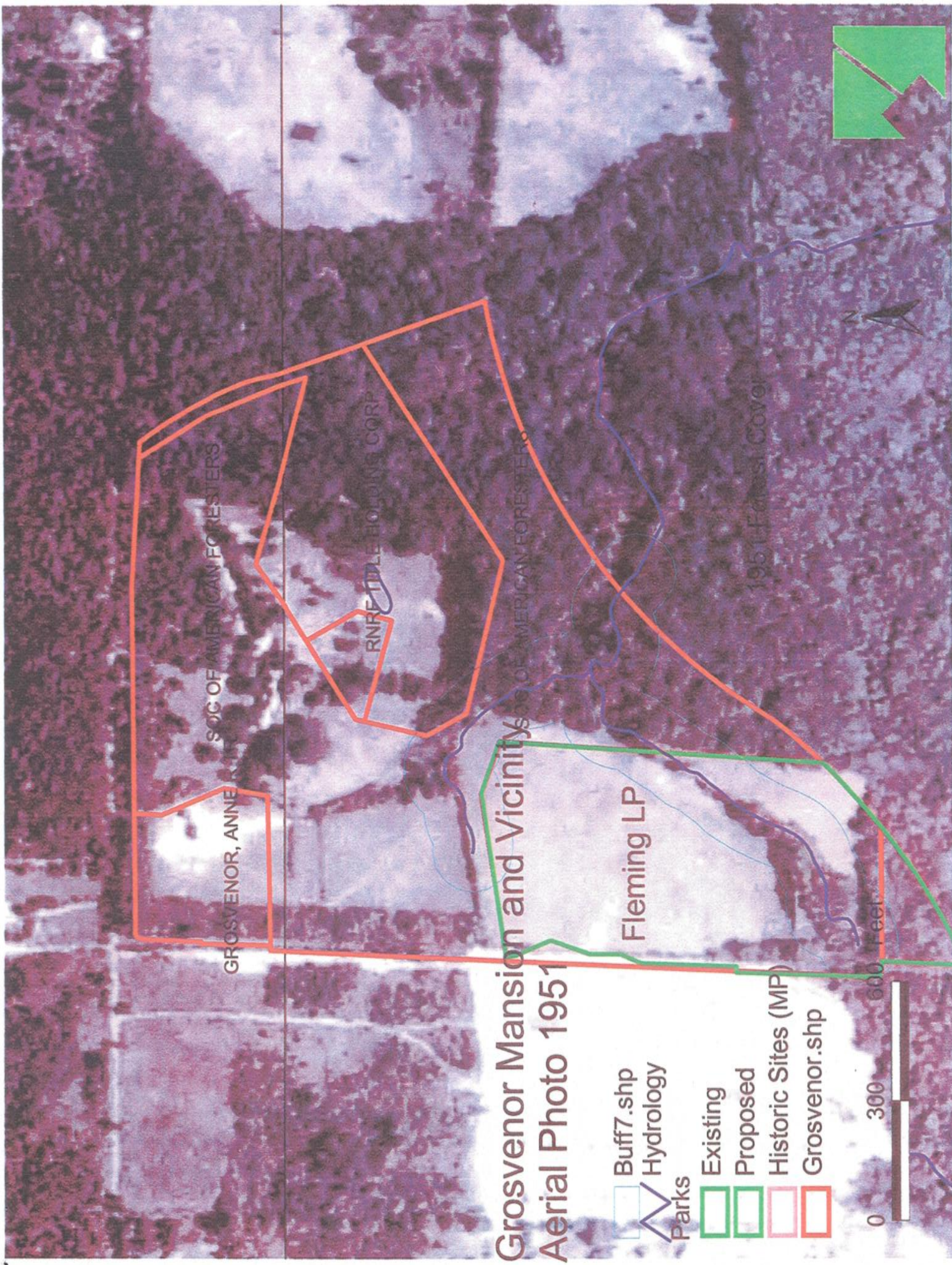
Is there a good reason the citizens of the county should not continue to have input, via the Historic Preservation Commission, as to how this estate may be best preserved when current and future occupants and owners wish to make changes in their own interests?

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








Sincerely,



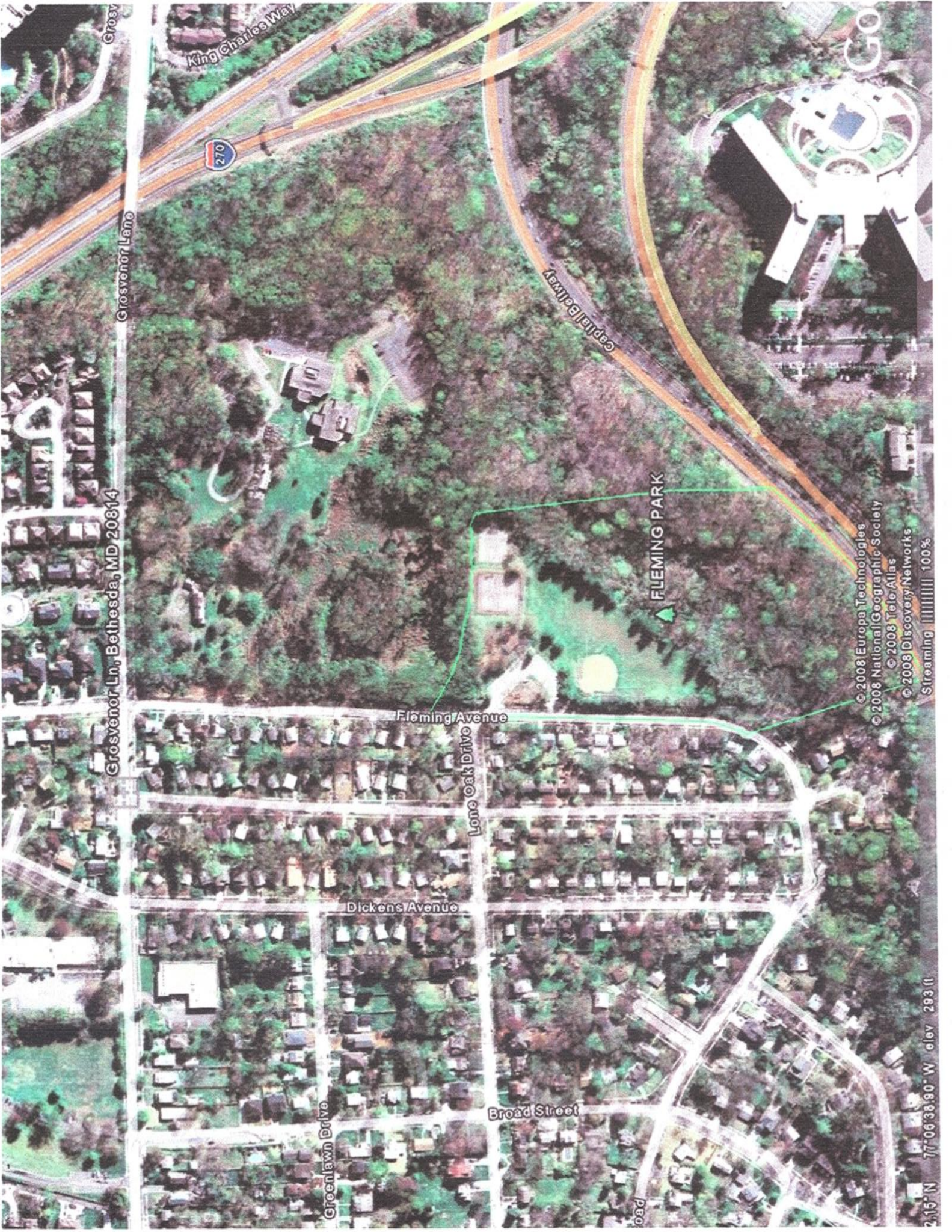
**Irene Elliott
10014 Fleming Ave.
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-530-8591**



Grosvenor Mansion and Vicinity Aerial Photo 1951

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





Grosvenor Ln, Bethesda, MD 20814

Grosvenor Lane

Crosby

King Charles Way



Campeadero

GO

FLEMING PARK

Fleming Avenue

Lone Oak Drive

Dickens Avenue

Greenlawn Drive

Broad Street

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2,15° N 77° 06' 38.90" W elev 293 ft

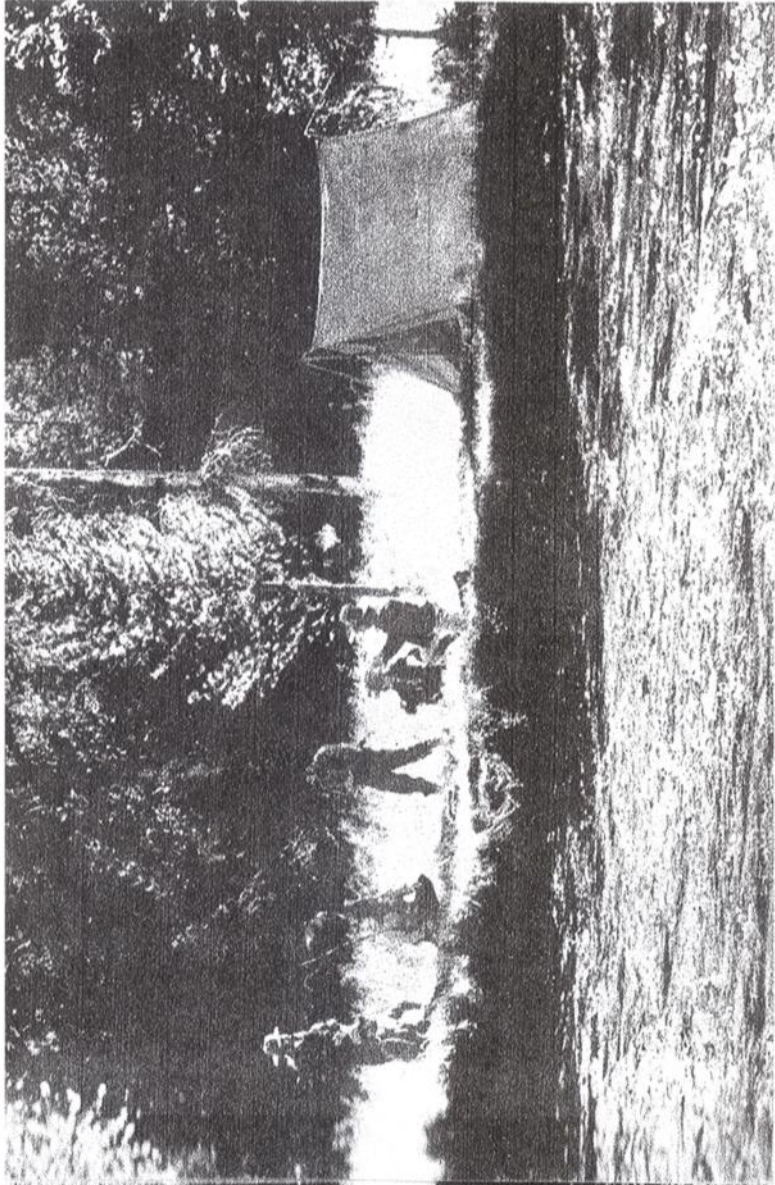
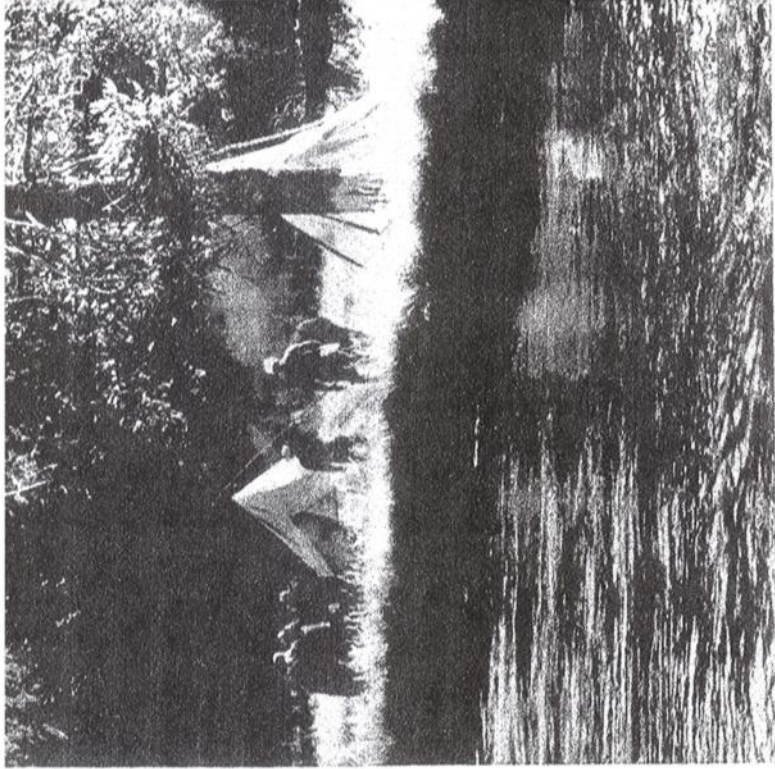
Yellowstone campers re-enact the drama that gave birth to the park

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. HULLER BECKLEY, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHY

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, scoring 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.

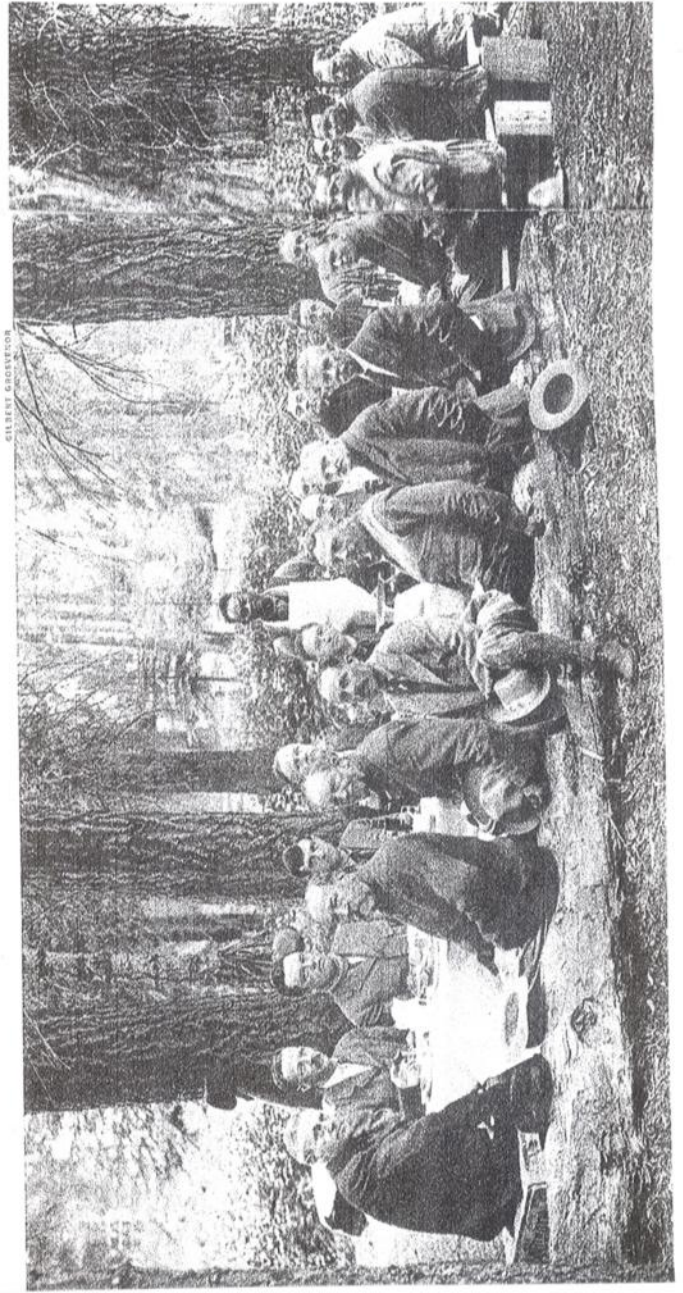
In 1958 The Society gave the American people Russell Cave in Alabama. Here the Smithsonian Institution excavated Indian homesites 9,000 years old. It is one of the few properties in the Park System that memorialize North American man from the time of his arrival here from Asia, more than 25,000 years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

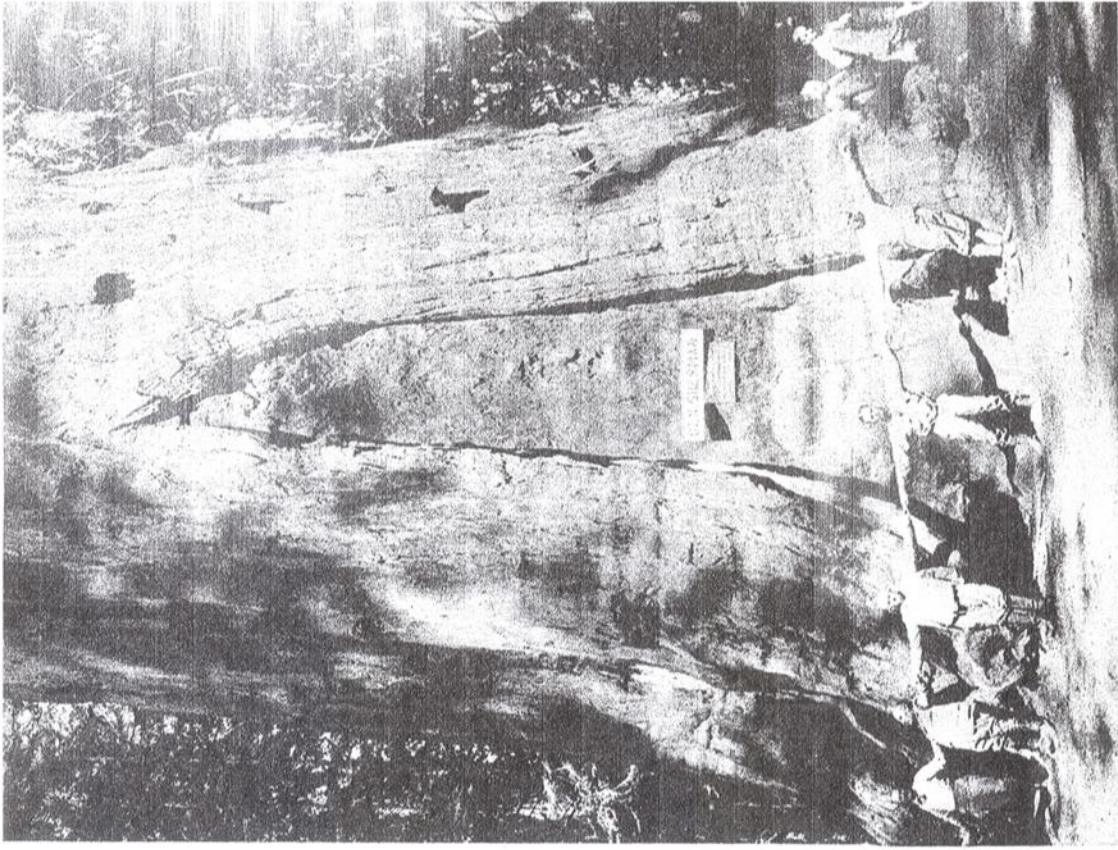
Among the responsibilities we assumed in the thirties was the park system of Washington, D. C. It contains 792 pieces of property, including the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, Rock Creek Park, parts of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and so many statues I've lost count. We have the White House 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

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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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