



MCPB Item # __ # 10 __

Date: 09/24/09

DATE: September 18, 2009

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Mary Bradford, Director of Parks *M Bradford*
 Mike Riley, Deputy Director of Parks *MR*
 John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning & Stewardship Division *J Hench*

FROM: Brenda Sandberg, Legacy Open Space Manager *BES*
 Joey Lampl, Cultural Resources Stewardship, Manager *Joey Lampl*
 Julie Mueller, Cultural Resources Stewardship, Project Manager

RE: Warner Circle Special Park Briefing

SUMMARY

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Discuss and Provide Guidance to Staff

Staff will brief the Planning Board on the proposed concept plan for Warner Circle Special Park. Staff proposes to move forward with consultant contracts to complete planning and design work and to seek construction funding within the FY11-FY16 CIP cycle to meet the following goals:

- # 1. Create a landscaped open space park that serves as a Town Green for Kensington and supports county-wide public events
- # 2. Provide historical and archaeological interpretation of this important historical site to the County's citizens
- # 3. Restore and rehabilitate the historic structures through adaptive reuse as public meeting space and park staff offices

Staff believes it is essential to activate vacant buildings on Parks' historic inventory with appropriate uses to prevent deterioration, and thus recommends moving forward with all due speed with this park rehabilitation project.

BACKGROUND

Warner Circle Special Park (WCSP), located in the heart of the Kensington historic district, was the home of Brainard Warner, the founder of the Town of Kensington, Maryland, and a significant figure in the development of Montgomery County. This 4.5-acre property was acquired by M-NCPPC in 2005-2006 through the Legacy Open Space program to meet three public needs:

- Preservation of two historic buildings of countywide significance
- Preservation of historic landscaped open space that has served as *de facto* public parkland for decades
- Provision of another public benefit through adaptive reuse of the large historic buildings

The site includes an 1890's Queen Anne house and carriage house, two historic additions built in 1913-1914 (a wing to the west and a rear ell), and a 1960's non-contributing nursing home addition consisting of a long, two-level wing to the south and a shorter, one-story kitchen addition to the east (see Attachment A for photos and phases of development site plan).

The site was occupied as a nursing home until 2005 and has been vacant since that time. Park staff monitors the property regularly and significant effort has been expended to maintain the grounds & historic buildings. Maintenance and improvement projects to date include regular landscape & tree maintenance, removal of dead/hazardous trees, structural repairs as necessary, and an exterior paint job in colors determined by historic paint analysis, among many projects.

Public outreach to the Town of Kensington and surrounding communities has been extensive since the acquisition of this property, including a public charrette in 2006 and ongoing coordination with the Town of Kensington's Warner Circle Committee, Mayor, and Council; the Kensington Historical Society; and other interested parties.

PARK PLANNING, PHASE I: Partnership Request for Proposals (RFP)

Initial efforts to find a use for the historic buildings in this park focused on finding a private partner to fund the capital costs of rehabilitation in return for a low- or no-cost lease on the buildings. After significant coordination with the community over a two year period, an RFP was published in February 2008 to seek a private partner for an appropriate reuse of the buildings. The RFP application window closed in July 2008. Despite extensive outreach efforts and significant verbal interest in the buildings at several open houses, the lengthy search process did not result in any viable applicants that met the RFP criteria.

PARK PLANNING, PHASE II: Concept Plan Development

Since the attempt to find private capital for this rehabilitation project through the RFP process did not succeed, staff has pursued a publicly-funded reuse of the buildings that is compatible with the maintenance of this important open space and the provision of historic interpretation on the site. An architectural/ engineering team (BELL Architects and Robert Silman Associates) is currently under contract to create a Concept Plan for the park and adaptive reuse of the buildings. Several years of close coordination with the Kensington community has resulted in the identification of several community needs and desires for this park that are being incorporated in the Concept Plan. In addition to significant community outreach, the consultants and Parks staff has coordinated with Historic Preservation staff and Community Planning staff in the Planning Department.

The Concept Plan is focusing on three key goals – landscape preservation, historical interpretation, and historic structure rehabilitation – each addressed below in more detail.

Goal #1: Create a landscaped open space park that serves as a Town Green for Kensington and supports county-wide public events

The four acres of landscaped grounds surrounding the Warner house and carriage house have long served as a Town Green for the residents of the Town of Kensington and served many uses for the broader Montgomery County community. During the site's tenure as a nursing home facility, many seasonal and holiday events were programmed on the site for the community. In addition, several local organizations held art shows, small festivals, and outdoor concerts on the grounds. The desire is strong to maintain the park in such a form that it can continue to support such local and county-wide events.

Goal #2: Provide historical and archaeological interpretation of this important historical site to the County's citizens

Historical interpretation will focus on the role of the occupants of the Brainard Warner House in first establishing and then promoting Kensington as a Late Victorian model suburb and on the history of Kensington itself. Interpretation will be coordinated with the Kensington Historical Society, using photographs from its collection and will be supplemented by additional research undertaken by Parks historians. Archaeological artifacts found on the site during construction also will be displayed in the house. County residents will have the opportunity to participate in the archaeological excavations.

Interpretation will not be limited, however, to this site alone. The main house will feature a library with information on all of the Department of Parks' publicly interpreted sites countywide that will be open to the public. Rotating exhibits on other County historic sites are envisioned in public spaces of the historic buildings. The archaeological laboratory also will be open to the public on a regular basis to promote an understanding of the countywide archaeology program and for volunteer archaeology opportunities, including excavations.

Goal #3: Restore and rehabilitate the historic structures through adaptive reuse as public meeting space and park staff offices

The Department of Parks has identified an office use for the buildings that will be compatible with the residential and historic neighborhood: the headquarters for the Department of Parks' Park Planning & Stewardship (PPS) Division and public meeting spaces. The Concept Plan will address office space needs for approximately 30-35 staff and create OSHA-compliant aquatics and archaeology laboratories within the historic setting of the large landscaped park property.

The rationale for placing the PPS Division into the Warner House and Carriage House is multifold:

- PPS is currently housed in expensive leased office space in downtown Silver Spring. In the long term, it is more efficient with scarce tax dollars to house staff in park-owned facilities instead of leased space. The current lease will expire in December, 2010.
- The Warner property is the most appropriate Park-owned site for this Division based on size of the existing buildings and proximity to MRO and Parkside.
- Locating Cultural Resources Stewardship including Archaeology staff in historic structures within a designated historic district creates synergy with the desired historical interpretation on this site.
- Cultural Resources Stewardship staff has responsibility, working with other Park Divisions, for maintaining all historic resources within the park system including the Warner property.

Five units of Park Planning & Stewardship are proposed to be consolidated onto the site with approximately 30-35 staff:

- Division Chief and Administration
- Cultural Resources Stewardship (including Archaeology relocating from multiple remote locations)
- Resource Analysis (including Aquatics)
- Park and Trail Planning
- Legacy Open Space

The remaining two units in the PPS Division, Natural Resources Stewardship and Natural Surface Trails Implementation, are adequately housed at other park locations and will not be moving to this site.

CONCEPT PLAN: Progress Report

Work on the Concept Plan to date has resulted in the following key recommendations for this park as planning and design move forward:

- 1. Create an overall plan for the Park that emphasizes its function as a Town Green for Kensington and county-wide public events and as an historic interpretive resource for the County.** The overall layout of the Park will incorporate historic and new architectural elements, be based on the historic landscape plan, and support the functions desired for the Town Green. Continuing the long history of this property as a green open space for all residents to enjoy is a critical goal for this park.
- 2. Remove the non-contributing, 1960's nursing home addition.** The nursing home wing is not compatible with the historic house. Analysis indicates that reuse of all or part of the nursing home wings, even with cosmetic and functional improvements, will not meet either the functional needs of Park offices or respect the historic character of the site. Removal of these additions will open currently blocked views to and from the historic buildings and create more pedestrian-friendly landscaped areas within the park.
- 3. Restore, rehabilitate, and renovate the historic house and carriage house to meet the space requirements for park offices and public meeting space.** Preservation treatment zones have been identified based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties. Adaptive reuse of the historic house and carriage house will provide approximately 10,000 square feet of usable office, meeting and storage space.
- 4. Build additional space (approximately 7,000 square feet) to meet the requirements for this reuse plan.** The estimated space requirement is for approximately 17,000 square feet, leaving a need to construct approximately 7,000 square feet of new space. The concept for the new space is to build partially underground with one small above-ground addition connected to the house via a hyphen, and one small pavilion that appears as a separate structure.
- 5. Design these new elements to be compatible with the significant architectural character of the buildings, to preserve relationships between the historic buildings, the grounds, and the scale of the surrounding neighborhood, and to read as secondary features, subservient to the house.** All design for the existing and new structures will be done according to the Secretary of Interior's Standards and will require review and approval by the county's Historic Preservation

Commission. In addition to creating stylistically compatible buildings, this approach will also retain many interior spaces as open and available for historic interpretation.

- 6. Design all elements of the park, buildings and landscape to be as “green” as possible, including energy efficient design, LEED certification, and low maintenance landscapes.**

See **Attachment C** for a series of sketches that illustrate Bell Architects progress on the draft Concept Plan that reflects the above recommendations for the Warner Circle Special Park.

NEXT STEPS

The buildings on this property have remained vacant for over four years and it is essential to occupy the buildings as soon as possible. Staff proposes to move this project forward expeditiously to facilitate the rehabilitation and occupancy of this historic house. By doing so, we achieve the relocation of PPS staff to an appropriate Park location, eliminate expensive lease payments, and prevent deterioration of this important landmark. Several actions will be taken over the coming months to achieve these goals:

- 1. Use existing CIP funding to continue design work through delivery of construction documents and construction administration.** Existing funds in the Restoration of Historic Structures PDF are available to move forward with the remainder of the design work.
- 2. Seek FY11-16 CIP approvals from the Planning Board and County Council to fund estimated construction costs** (see Attachment C for PDF proposal). The construction cost estimate in this PDF is a placeholder based on the current 10% design completion. When Schematic Design (35%) drawings are complete, more precise cost estimates will be used to revise the PDF funding request.
- 3. Pursue creative funding sources to reduce impact on County budget, including:**
 - State Bond Bills (\$250K existing, requesting additional bond bill funds during 2010 legislative session)
 - Federal grants such as Save America’s Treasures
 - County funds (G.O. Bonds and/or Current Receipts)

Attachments

Attachment A: Existing Conditions Photographs & Site Plan

Attachment B: Concept Plan Sketches and Cross Sections, 9/18/09

Attachment C: Warner Circle Special Park PDF proposal for FY11-16 CIP

cc: Brian Woodward, Chief, Southern Region
John Nissel, Chief, Facility Management Division
Gene Giddens, Deputy Director of Parks

Darien Manley, Chief, Park Police
Fred Boyd, Planning Department

Attachment A: Existing Conditions Photographs & Site Plan



The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Montgomery County Department of Parks
Park Planning and Stewardship Division

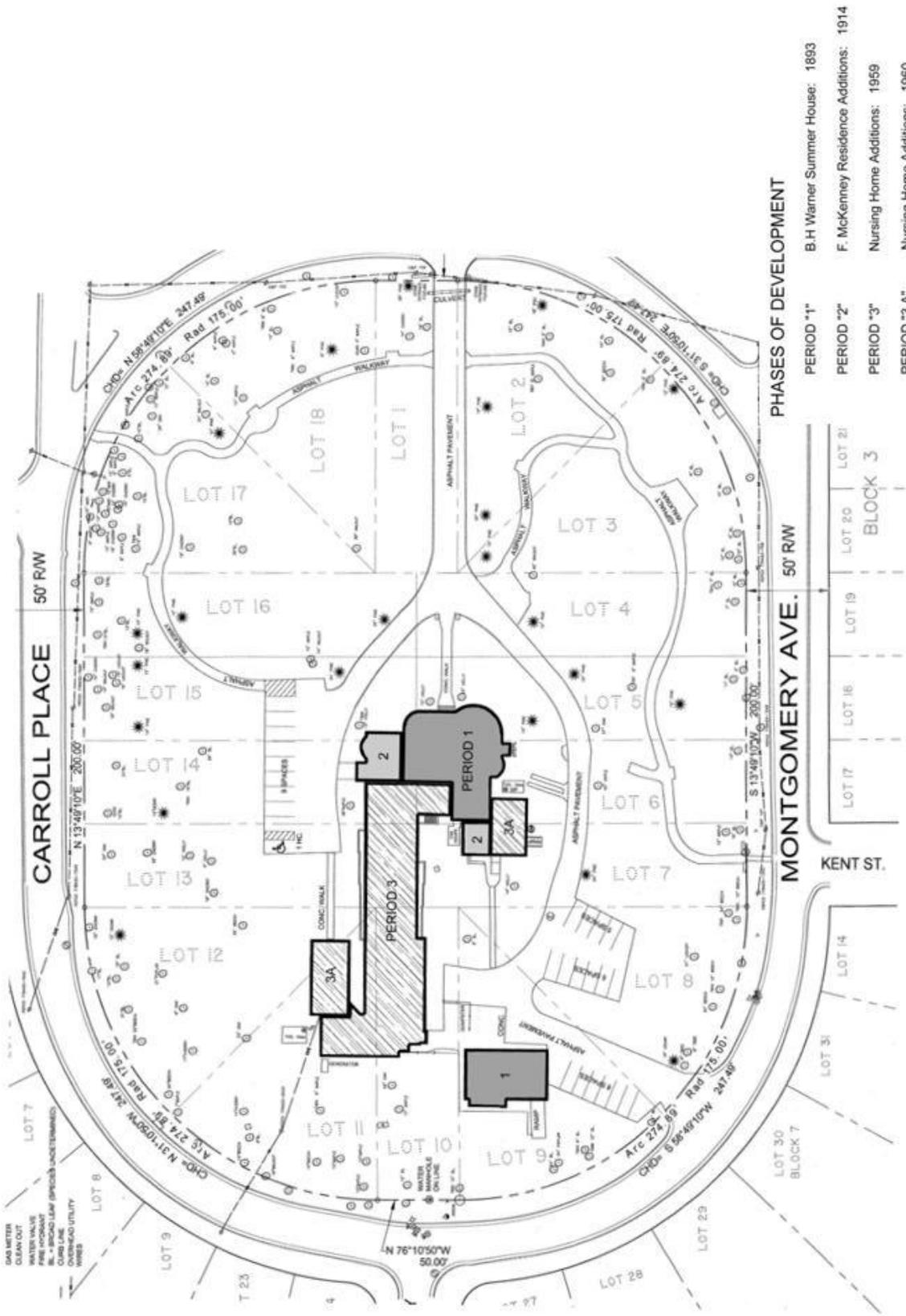
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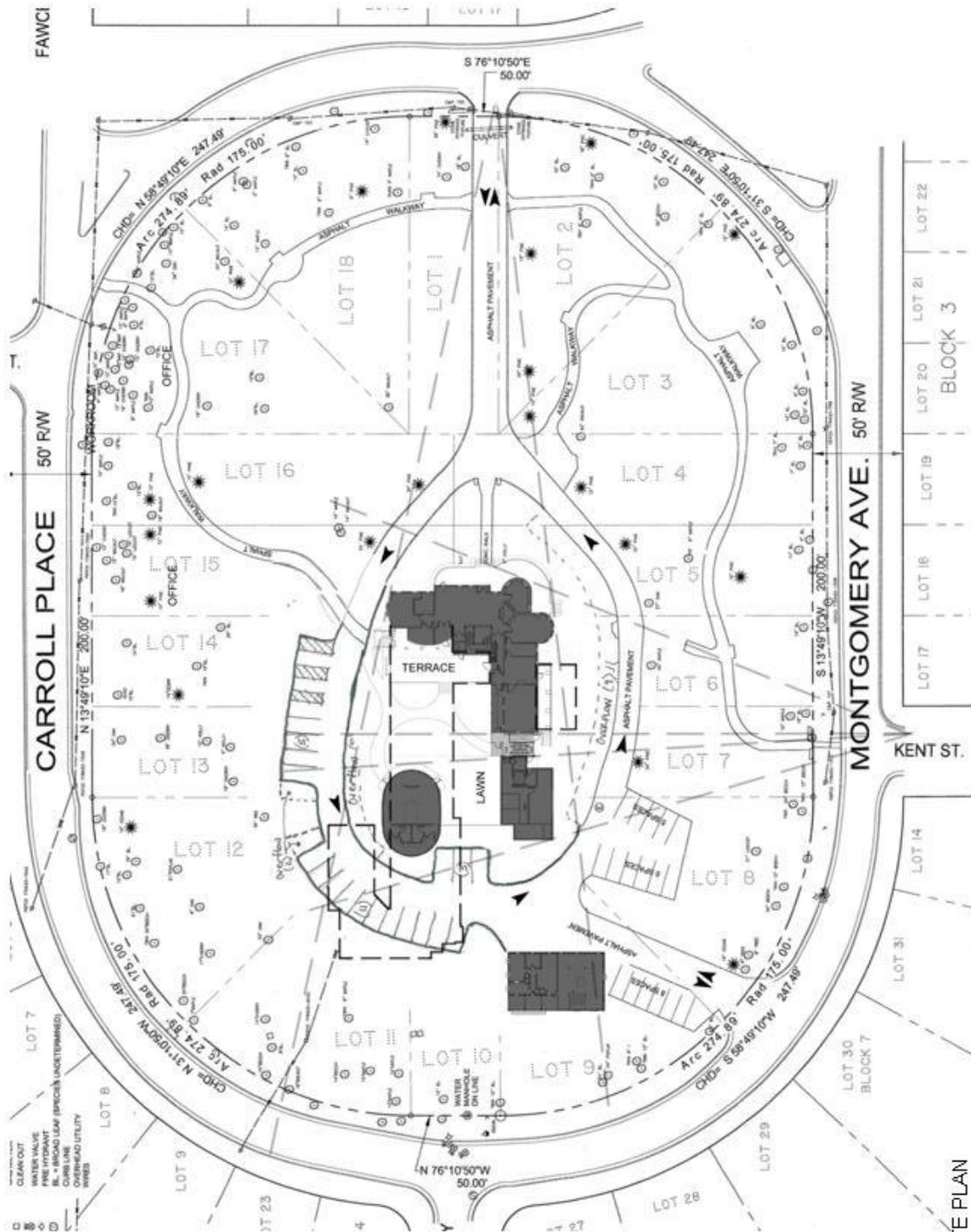




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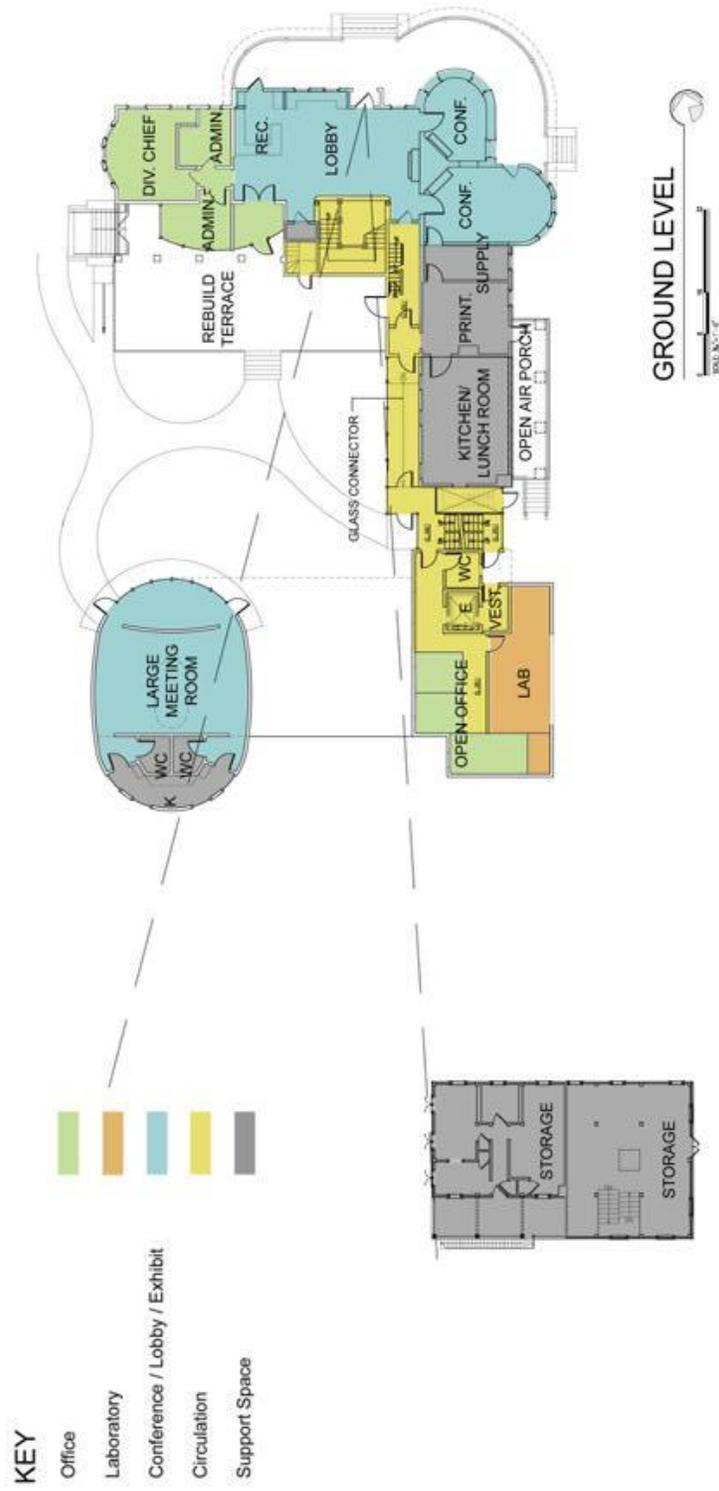
Attachment B: Concept Plan Sketches and Cross Sections, 9/18/09



CONCEPT - SITE PLAN

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Montgomery County Department of Parks
Park Planning and Stewardship Division

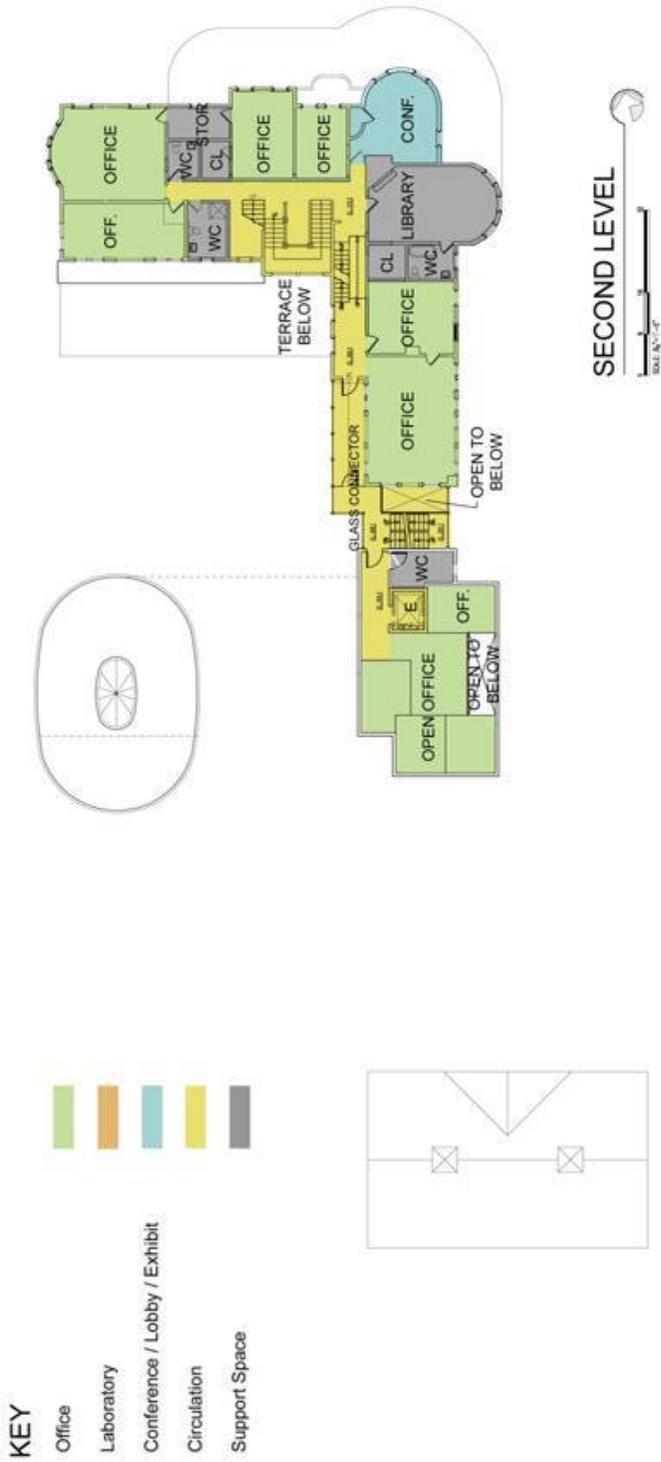
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CONCEPT - GROUND FLOOR PLAN

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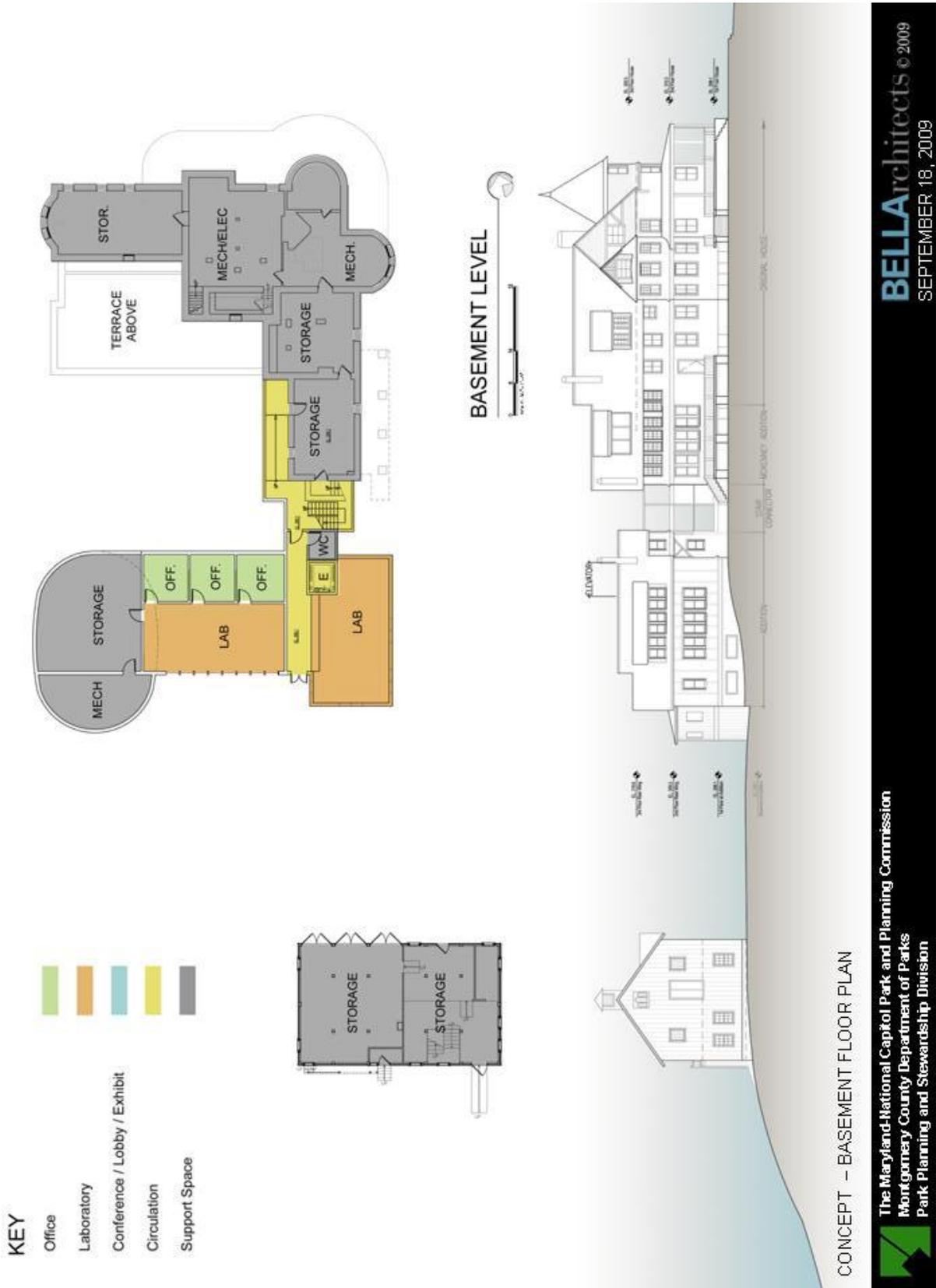
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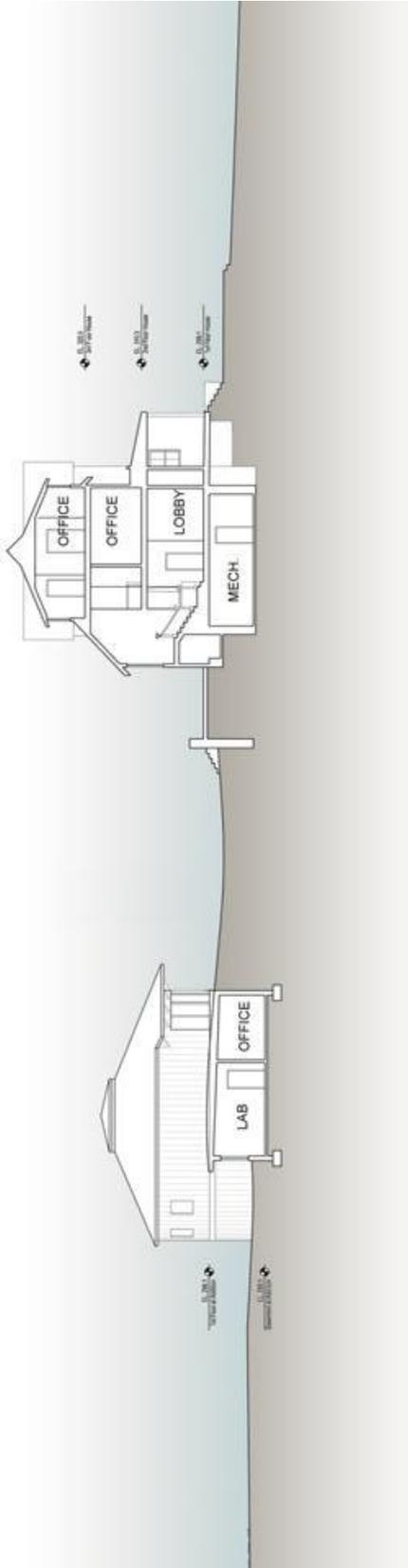


CONCEPT - SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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CONCEPT - SECTIONS

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Attachment C: Warner Circle Special Park PDF proposal for FY11-16 CIP

Warner Circle Special Park -- No. 118703

Category	M-NCPPC	Date Last Modified	September 17, 2009
Subcategory	Development	Required Adequate Public Facility	No
Administering Agency	M-NCPPC	Relocation Impact	None
Planning Area	Kensington-Wheaton	Status	Preliminary Design Stage

EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000)

Cost Element	Total	Thru FY09	Est. FY10	Total 6 Years	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	Beyond 6 Years
Planning, Design, and Supervision	200	0	0	200	50	100	50	0	0	0	0
Land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Site Improvements and Utilities	2,800	0	0	2,800	700	1,400	700	0	0	0	0
Construction	2,000	0	0	2,000	500	1,000	500	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5,000	0	0	5,000	1,250	2,500	1,250	0	0	0	0

FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000)

Funding Source	Total	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	Beyond 6 Years
Federal Aid	100	0	0	100	0	100	0	0	0	0
G.O. Bonds	3,650	0	0	3,650	1,000	1,400	1,250	0	0	0
State Bonds (P&P only)	1,250	0	0	1,250	250	1,000	0	0	0	0
Total	5,000	0	0	5,000	1,250	2,500	1,250	0	0	0

DESCRIPTION

Warner Circle Special Park (WCSP), located in the heart of the Kensington historic district, was the home of Brainerd Warner, the founder of the Town of Kensington, Maryland, and a significant figure in the development of Montgomery County. This 4.5-acre property was acquired by M-NCPPC in 2005-2006 through the Legacy Open Space program to achieve three public needs: a) preservation of two historic buildings of countywide significance, b) preservation of historic landscaped open space that has served as de facto public parkland for decades, and c) provision of another public benefit through adaptive reuse of the large historic buildings.

Planning and design work for this new park has been underway since 2006. Several years of close coordination with the Town of Kensington and other interested communities has resulted in the identification of community needs and desires that are being incorporated into the design. This PDF will fund construction of the completed design that focuses on three goals for the new park:

1. Create a landscaped open space park that serves as a Town Green for Kensington and supports county-wide public events
2. Provide historical and archaeological interpretation of this important historical site to the County's citizens
3. Restore and rehabilitate the historic structures through adaptive reuse as public meeting space and park staff offices

It is essential to activate vacant buildings on Parks' historic inventory with appropriate uses to prevent deterioration. This project will accomplish that for a large publicly-owned historic site with county-wide significance.

Estimated SCHEDULE

Design in FY09-10
Construction in FY11-13

JUSTIFICATION

Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation (1979; Kensington Historic District listed in 1986)
From Artifact to Attraction: A Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks (January 2006)
National Register of Historic Places: Kensington Historic District (1980)
Vision for Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan (1992)
Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan (2001)

FISCAL NOTE

Project cost estimate is based on 10% conceptual design as a placeholder amount. M-NCPPC will inform the Council in spring 2010 at 35% Schematic Design of any funding adjustments.

\$250,000 in state bond bills were awarded to M-NCPPC in 2004 and 2006. An additional \$1.1 million in state and federal bonds and grants will be pursued.

APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA	COORDINATION	MAP
Date First Appropriation	Restoration of Historic Structures, PDF# 808494	See Map on Next Page
FY11 (\$000)		
First Cost Estimate		
Current Scope		
FY11		
5,000		
Last FY's Cost Estimate		
0		
Appropriation Request		
FY11		
5,000		
Appropriation Request Est.		
FY12		
0		
Supplemental Appropriation Request		
0		
Transfer		
0		
Cumulative Appropriation		
0		
Expenditures / Encumbrances		
0		
Unencumbered Balance		
0		
Partial Closeout Thru		
FY08		
0		
New Partial Closeout		
FY09		
0		
Total Partial Closeout		
0		

Agency Request

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