



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
9/26/02
Item # 9



MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 19, 2002
TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: Joe R. Davis, Chief
Michael Ma, Supervisor *Ma*
Development Review Division
Michael Ma, Supervisor
Planning Department Staff
FROM: Mary Beth O'Quinn, Site Plan Review *mboc*
(301) 495-1322

REVIEW TYPE: Site Plan Review concurrent with Preliminary Plan Review
APPLYING FOR: Approval of 12 townhouses 2.17 net acres
PROJECT NAME: Green Hills
CASE #: 8-02033
REVIEW BASIS: Sec. 59-D-3, Zoning Ordinance: Site Plan required in the RT-6 Zone

ZONE: RT-6
LOCATION: Ridge Road, 800' north of Tralee Terrace, 900' south of Valley Park Drive
MASTER PLAN: Damascus
APPLICANT: Allen Roy Builders, Inc.
FILING DATE: June 28, 2002
HEARING DATE: September 26, 2002

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of 11 townhouses on 2.47 net acres, subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard Conditions dated October 10, 1995, Appendix A
2. Conditions of MCDPS stormwater management concept approval dated June 3, 2002. Final design of the stormwater management pond shall be submitted to Environmental Planning and Parks Planning staff for review and comment prior to MCDPS approval.

3. Transportation: For Signature Set, provide verification for improvements along frontage of Ridge Road, including curb and gutter, and sidewalks, if appropriate, in coordination with the State Highway Administration. Improvements shall be completed at 70% occupancy of the residential units.
4. Environmental:
Conditions of approval of the Final Forest Conservation Plan (including grading and tree protection information) shall the following conditions prior to recording of plat and MCDEP issuance of sediment and erosion control permit. Final forest conservation plan shall include tree protection measures along the limits of disturbance and a sediment and erosion control plan that is consistent with the forest conservation plan. Conditions include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Provision of an arborist's report at signature set for significant tree save outside of the environmental buffer;
 - b. Landscaping and planting for storm water management facilities subject to staff review in coordination with DPS, prior to signature set;
 - c. Category I Conservation Easements to be placed over Parcel A, including forest-save areas and environmental buffer; record plats to reflect delineation of a Category I Conservation easement which includes the stream/wetland buffers and forest conservation areas, as shown on the site plan and landscape plan;
 - d. Final erosion and sediment control plans shall be submitted to Environmental Planning staff for review and comment prior to approval by MCDPS.
 - e. Decks: no decks shall be allowed for Units 1-4; locate deck structures out of the stream valley buffer for the remaining units adjacent to the conservation easement area;
 - f. The Final Forest Conservation Plan must be approved and bonded prior to issuance of the sediment and erosion control permit.
5. Site, landscape/lighting, forest conservation, and sediment and erosion control plans subject to review by staff prior to signature set. Prior to signature approval of the site/landscape plans, the applicant shall provide the following additional information or revisions to the plans:
 - a. **Site Plan**: Show all easements, limits of disturbance, PUEs, PIEs, HOA common space, correct area, forestation on site and off site, dimensions and placement of sidewalks, pedestrian paths, bicycle paths, high priority forest, and storm water facility parcels, heights of any retaining walls.
 - b. **Site Design**:
 - i. Compatibility:
Delete Lot 5 to allow adequate area for the stormwater management facility, permit acceptable vehicular turning radius at end driveways, and to attain adequate noise mitigation in outdoor areas. Shift Units 6-12 to allow better fit for stormwater facility.
 - ii. Shift Units 1-4 approximately 20 feet to the east to allow construction of the house foundations at a lower land elevation, to

enlarge the berm along Ridge Road, and to provide effective placement of noise walls for mitigation of existing noise levels;

c. **Site Construction:**

- i. Provide detail drawings for all retaining walls; all retaining walls shall be constructed of masonry materials, subject to review by staff prior to signature set; retaining walls to be limited to 8 feet in height;

d. **Site Circulation:**

- i. Pedestrian/Bicycle Trails: Show an 8-foot wide paved trail, according to M-NCPPC technical standards and specifications, within Parcel B adjacent to the subject property to provide access to Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park hiker/biker trail. Trail alignment to be coordinated with M-NCPPC staff;
- ii. Storm water facility access: Specify materials and dimensions for the storm water facility access lane or shared access points; indicated appropriate easement on plan for facility access, subject to DPS review and approval;

e. **Landscape and Lighting:**

- i. Provide specifications for all lighting, including mounting height and details, fixture housing, wattage;
- ii. Provide lighting distribution plan at 30' = 1" scale for public street and site; show maximum to minimum uniformity ratios, indicate minimum, average, and maximum lighting values in foot candles; provide light shields to eliminate light trespass onto second and third stories rooms; use only full cut-off fixtures.
- iii. Provide detailed planting plan for the berm area to substantially screen both sides of the noise walls along Ridge Road;
- iv. Provide ornamental trees for each of the islands between the driveways for Units 6-12;
- v. Provide additional shade trees with understory planting at the parking area along the south property line;
- vi. Provide signage for public access trails and conservation areas; include details for signage.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES ADDRESSED AT SITE PLAN:

During the course of site plan review, staff and the applicant studied alternatives for mitigation of the noise levels generated by traffic on Ridge Road. Compatibility of the number of housing units and siting of the homes were considered with respect to the noise issues, adjacent development, adequate internal vehicular dimensions, and preservation of the Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park.

ISSUES EXTANT AT THE TIME OF STAFF REPORT

Compatible Building Locations: **Achieving Acceptable Outdoor Noise Levels, Usable Open Space**

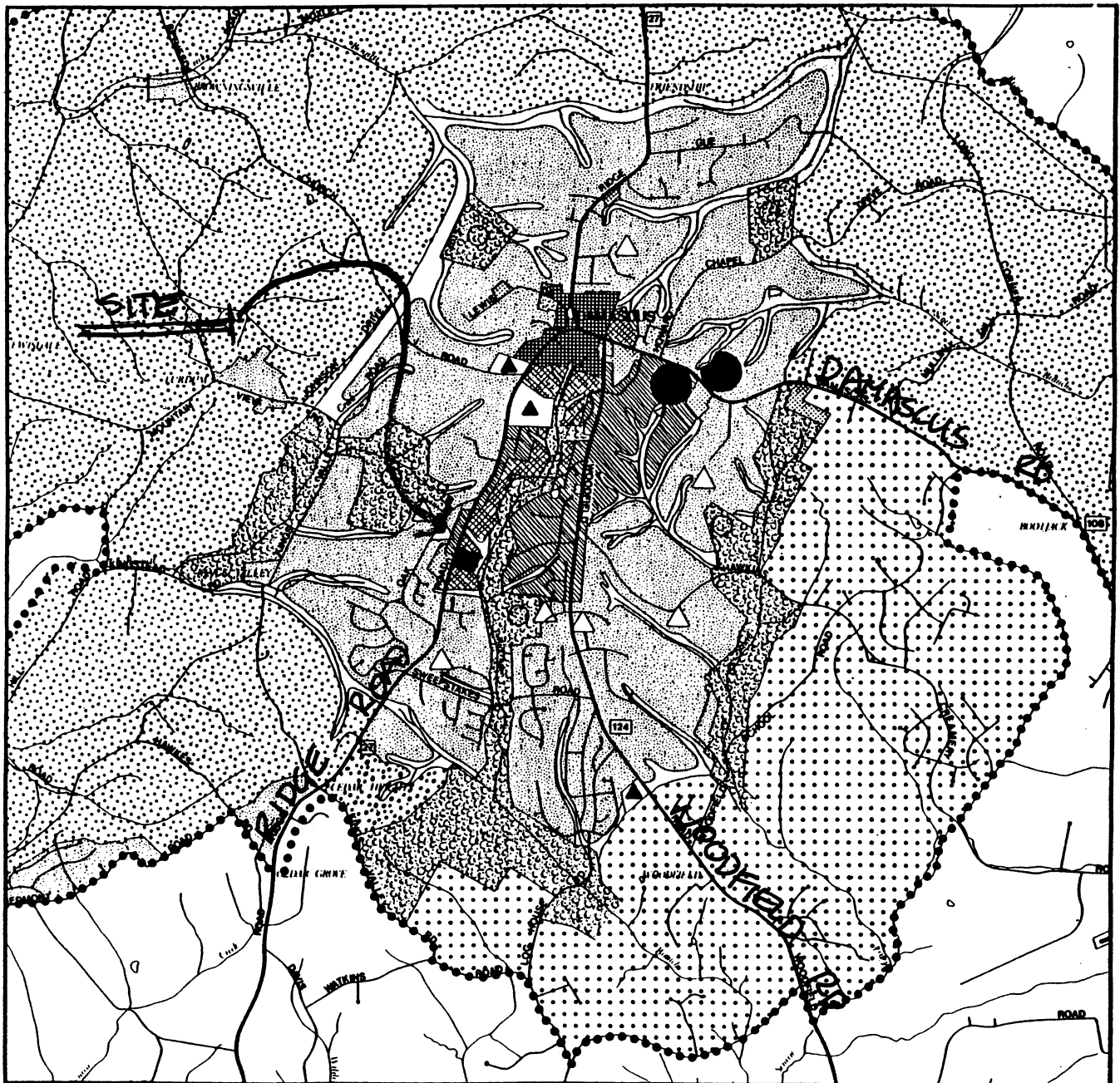
APPLICANT POSITION: House locations as proposed.

STAFF POSITION: The limited area of the site, its irregular shape, and unusual access conditions impose substantial difficulty in achieving an environment of adequate compatibility. This may be observed acutely in the relationship between the proposed houses and the character of Ridge Road as a major transportation artery. The siting and orientation of the houses on the slope exposes the yards to the excessive noise levels from the heavy stream of traffic and compromises the quality and usefulness of the outdoor space. Relocation of the houses at a lower grade on the slope will achieve a greater level of mitigation, and enhance the outdoor public areas of the site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Surrounding Vicinity

The site is located about one mile south of the Damascus Town Center at the intersection of Ridge Road and Main Street (MD 108), which functions as the commercial center for northern Montgomery and Western Howard County.

Ridge Road (Route 27), an arterial road, accommodates significant north-south travel from Howard, Carroll, and Frederick Counties to employment centers along the I-270 Corridor. Ridge Road offers limited Ride-On Bus Service.



VICINITY MAP FOR

GREEN HILLS (8-02033)



Map compiled on July 03, 2002 at 3:00 PM | Site located on base sheet no - 236NW10

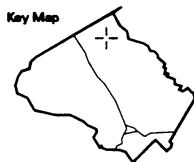
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Key Map



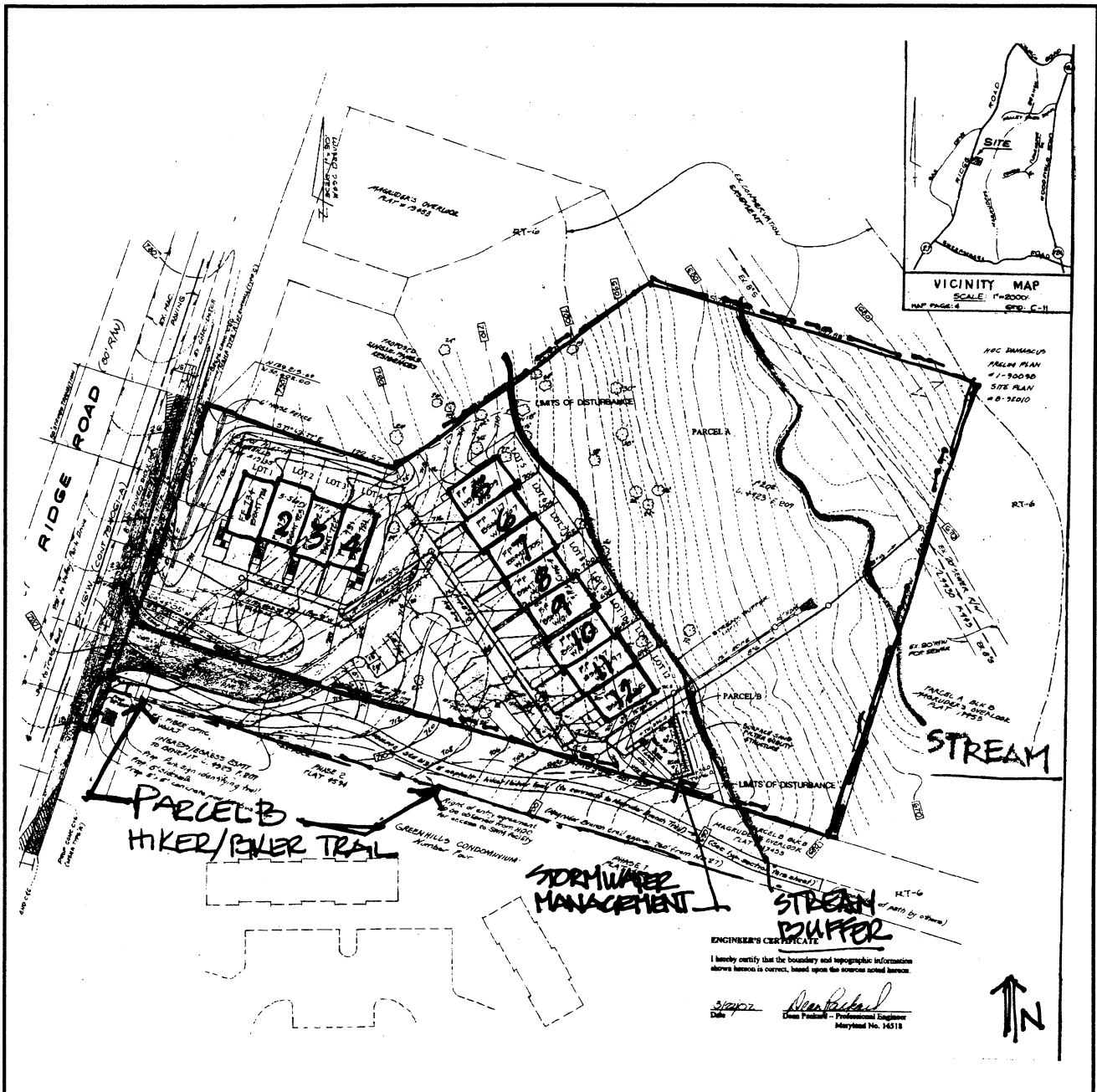
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Site Description

The property consists of approximately 2.44 acres located in the Magruder Branch watershed with frontage on Route 27 (Ridge Road). Currently, there is an existing single family house reached by a gravel road that borders the southern property line. The stream, an Order 1 Tributary of the Magruder Branch of the Great Seneca Creek runs through the northeast corner of the site. Both sides of the stream valley are wooded with significant forestation. The slopes are moderately steep, 15% to 25% and greater in places. The southwest half of the site, proposed for the residential development, is moderately sloping, with its highest point adjacent to the road.

The soils over most of these slopes are severely erodible, especially within the stream buffer. The site is mostly forested, with 2.21 acres of natural forestation. The forest is a very good quality Chestnut Oak, White Oak and Hickory woods with other associated hardwood species. Partial clearing has been performed within the southwest section of the site, where the natural grades would better support the proposed development.

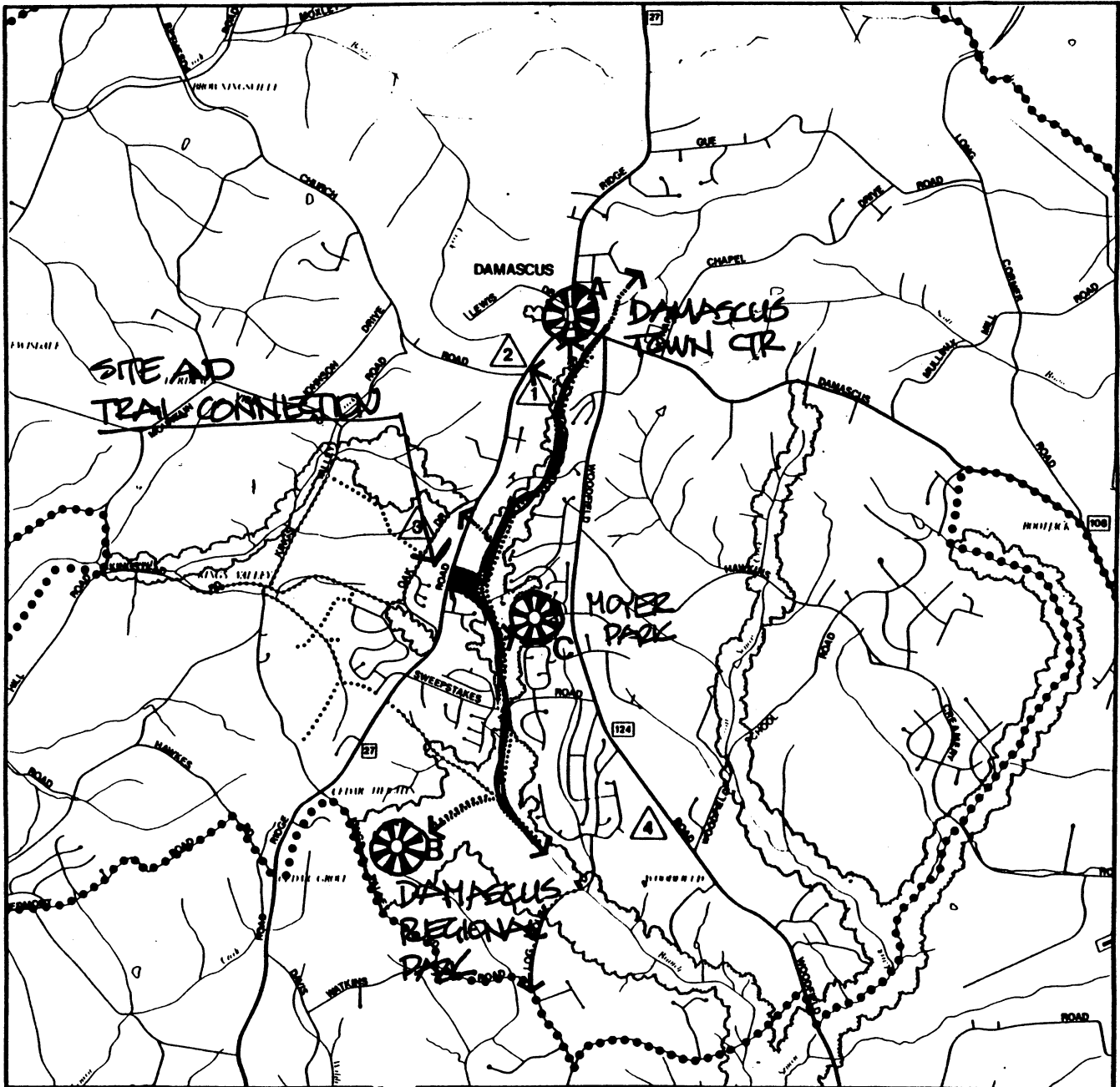
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposal

The plan features two lines of townhouses that form a wide L-shape arrangement of houses that face a central open space. This center, visible from the entry off Ridge Road, offers a landscaped island with visitor parking. The houses themselves are composed of a line of 4 houses orientated upon the higher slope, with its side to Ridge Road; the back line of 8 units that are oriented against facing the entry with unit rear toward the stream buffer. The houses form a small, intimate enclave that is visually secluded, and takes advantage of the surrounding natural forestation. The proposal includes a 40-foot linear Parcel B adjacent to the south property that will offer a hiker/biker trail connection to the Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park.



ANALYSIS: Conformance to Master Plan

The proposal conforms to the Damascus Master Plan (1985) in its recommendations for land use and the provision of pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park. This trail makes possible the inclusion of recreation facilities provided in the nearby Moyer Road Park.



ANALYSIS: Conformance to Zoning Regulation

Project name **Green Hills**
Site Plan 8-02033 **RT-6 Zone**

PROJECT DATA TABLE

<u>Development Standard</u>	<u>Permitted/Reqd</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Gross Lot Area (ac)	0.5 Acres	2.17 acres
Density of Development	6 du/acre	5.4 du/acre
Green Space %		
Building Coverage	35%	10.30%
Impervious Area%	50,747 sf [50%]	75,106 sf [74%]
Lot Width		
Building Height	35 feet min	35 feet min
Setbacks (lf)		
Front	25 feet min	35 feet min
Side	10 feet	26 feet
Rear	35 feet	35 feet
Parking		
Standard	2 spaces/du	3.2 spaces/du

FINDINGS: For Site Plan Review

1. *The Site Plan is consistent with an approved development plan or a project plan for the optional method of development if required.*
2. *The Site Plan meets all of the requirements of the zone in which it is located.*
3. *The location of the building and structures, the open spaces, the landscaping, recreation facilities, and the pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems are adequate, safe and efficient.*

a. Location of Buildings

The four houses at the entrance sit upon the sloping topography, and feature a sidewise orientation that provide the greatest level of noise abatement, while the placement of the housing at the back, offers units with direct access to the stream buffer park, and attractive, visually stimulating views

Staff recommends the deletion of one unit from the rear line of houses along the stream buffer for two reasons: first, the elimination of Unit #5 will allow the group of four houses on the hill at the entrance to shift downwards, increasing the effectiveness of noise abatement measures, second, the rear grouping of houses may be slightly shifted northward to provide adequate vehicular access to the stormwater facility and additional useful pedestrian access on site to the stream buffer recreation area.

b. Open Spaces

The two groups of houses are efficiently placed, and provide adequate, safe open spaces and views of the stream valley.

c. Landscaping and Lighting

The landscaping and lighting is adequate, safe, and efficient. The natural features of the stream valley and the natural forestation of the site provide the predominant landscaping. The parking areas and fronts of houses are planted with attractive clusters of maples, oaks, hollies and cypress, with a selection of ornamental trees.

Staff recommends that the lighting be delineated and further refined at signature set to ensure the compatibility of lighting levels at the stream buffer.

d. Recreation

The proposal is exempt from recreation requirement because there are fewer than 25 houses. However, its proximity to the Magruder Branch Stream Valley Park and the trails through the stream valley offers access to the Moyer Road Park with additional recreational amenities.

e. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

Vehicular and pedestrian circulation is adequate, safe, and efficient. The vehicular circulation system consists of a general L-shape drive serving the house fronts with garage fronts. The driveways are supplemented with three small areas for visitor parking. Pedestrian circulation is provided by means of a sidewalk from Ridge Road and by the MNCPPC hiker/biker trail with parallels the property line at the south and connects directly to the Magruder Park stream valley.

4. Each structure and use is compatible with other uses and other Site Plans and with existing and proposed adjacent development.

The proposed housing is compatible with the adjacent townhouse development on Tralee Terrace. The angled arrangement of the two lines of houses forms a complementary relationship between the new houses themselves and the existing surrounding development.

5. The Site Plan meets all applicable requirements of Chapter 22A regarding forest conservation and Chapter 17 regarding Water Resource Protection.

The plan includes preservation of 2.39 acres in the stream valleys (0.22 acres off site preservation on adjacent property) and provision of 0.69 acres of on-site reforestation planting. The forest conservation areas will be protected by Category I conservation easement.

APPENDIX A: STANDARD CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL DATED 10-10-95:

1. Submit a Site Plan Enforcement Agreement, Development Review Program and Homeowner Association Documents for review and approval prior to approval of the signature set as follows:
 - a. Development Program to include a phasing schedule as follows:
 - 1) Streets tree planting must progress as street construction is completed, but no later than six months after completion of the units adjacent to those streets.
 - 2) Community-wide pedestrian pathways and recreation facilities must be completed prior to seventy percent occupancy of each phase of the development.
 - 3) Landscaping associated with each parking lot and building shall be completed as construction of each facility is completed.
 - 4) Pedestrian pathways and seating areas associated with each facility shall be completed as construction of each facility is completed.
 - 5) Clearing and grading to correspond to the construction phasing, to minimize soil erosion.
 - 6) Coordination of each section of the development and roads.

- 7) Phasing of dedications, stormwater management, sediment/erosion control, recreation, forestation, community paths, trip mitigation or other features.
 - 8) Phasing of site clearing and grading to minimize soil erosion.
 - 9) Phasing of stormwater management and forest planting.
- b. Site Plan Enforcement Agreement to delineate transportation management program, park maintenance agreement or other requirement of a condition of approval or staff correspondence
2. Signature set of site, landscape/lighting, forest conservation and sediment and erosion Control plans to include for staff review prior to approval by Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS):
 - a. Undisturbed stream buffers as shown on the site plan.
 - b. Limits of disturbance.
 - c. Methods and locations of tree protection.
 - d. Forest Conservation areas.
 - e. Location of stormwater facility outfalls from pond away from forest preservation or other environmentally sensitive areas.
 - f. Conditions of DPS Stormwater Management Concept approval letter dated June 3, 2002.
 - g. Note stating the M-NCPPC staff must inspect tree-save areas and protection devices prior to clearing and grading.
 - h. The development program inspection schedule.
 - i. Conservation easement boundary.
 - j. Details for and location of noise fencing to attenuate current noise levels to no more than 60 dBA Ldn for the outdoor back yard area of lots 43 and 51 north of proposed Valley Park Drive.
 3. Forest Conservation Plan shall satisfy all conditions of approval prior to recording of plat and DPS issuance of sediment and erosion control permit.
 4. No clearing or grading prior to M-NCPPC approval of signature set of plans.

