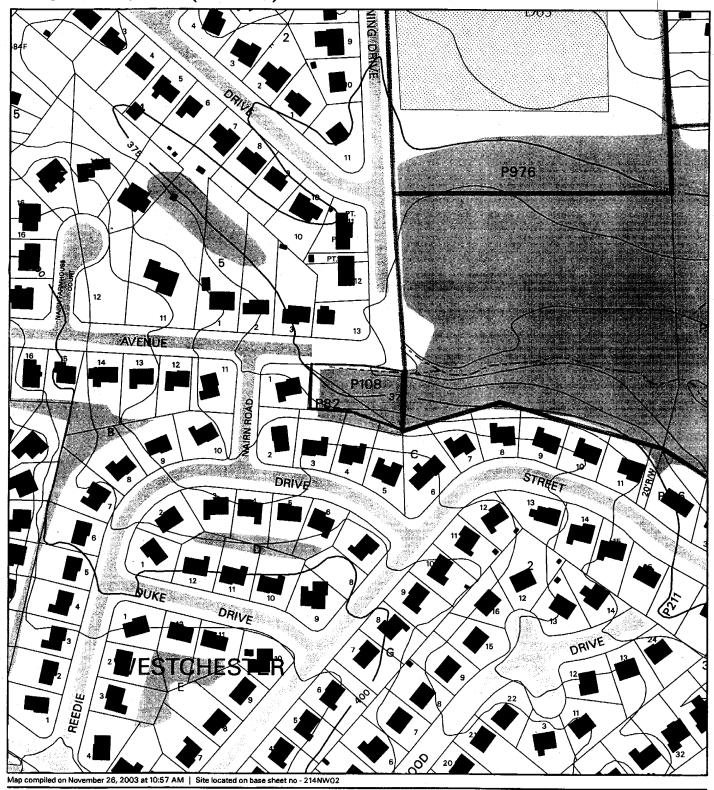
WESTCHESTER (1-02023)



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MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 2091 0-3760



MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION PRELIMINARY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

TO:

Subject:

Malcolm Shaneman

From: Dominic Quattrocchi

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Date: November 19, 2003 (January 7, 2002)

Westchester/Nairn Property (0.48 acres) 1-02023

The above-referenced plan has been reviewed to determine if it meets requirements of the Guidelines for Environmental Management of Development in Montgomery County, and other county regulations that may apply. This plan was originally taken to the Board for consideration for two lots and pulled by the applicant due to staff recommendation of one lot (denial of two lots). A subsequent one-lot scenario was approved by the Planning Board, conditioned in part on an approved Tree Save Plan. A Tree Save Plan was approved by M-NCPPC staff on 21APR2003.

Applicant provided a detailed tree save plan locating the home in an area to maximize protection of the stream buffer and significant trees on the site. The plan has received a small property exemption from requirements of the Forest Conservation Act. However, the exemption specifies and allows for a tree save plan under both the new and old forest conservation legislation. As part of the Tree Save Plan, all area within the proposed tree save area is placed into a Category 1 Conservation Easement. Per Montgomery County Environmental Guidelines, all forest within the stream valley buffer must be preserved and plat recorded as Category I Conservation Easement. A record plat indicating appropriate conservation easement area has been recorded.

Recommendation:

Environmental Planning staff recommended Approval of One Lot Only (denial of proposed Lot #13) based on inadequate protection of the environmental buffer with a two-lot proposal. Given zoning setbacks, and the typical size of new homes on this street, staff took a position that the forested stream buffer would have been compromised both during construction and occupancy with a two-lot scenario. One house/One lot on the Nairn property provides a more natural orientation to the street, provides a gentle transition to the stream buffer/conservation easement, and significantly reduces the loss of specimen and near specimen trees on the site.

The construction of two single-family detached houses (as originally proposed) would have eliminated the existing urban forest resource on the Westchester property. Due to the "shoehorning' nature of the two proposed lots and houses on this 0.48 property, retention and survival of existing trees, outside the proposed limits of disturbance is very questionable. Even one lot will require careful site design and layout to prevent a significant loss of specimen and significant trees on the site.

Site Description

The Westchester or Nairn Property is a 0.48 acre undeveloped "in-fill" site located in the Westchester area of Wheaton. The subject property is constrained by a stream buffer associated with the perennial headwaters tributary of Sligo Creek. The property is fully forested with a mature hardwood overstory and a well-developed understory. The property adjoins the M-NCPPC Sligo Creek Park. The Westchester property forest is an extension of the adjoining forest within the park. The property contains a WSSC right of way (for a 72" water line), an ephemeral drainage swale along Blueridge Avenue, and 3350 square feet of stream buffer (or 16.3%) of the 20,554 square foot site.

Forest on the Westchester/Narin property is high priority due to adjacency to Sligo Creek stream valley, maturity and size of trees, incorporation of environmental buffer and contiguous nature to larger offsite forest. This small mature bottomland forest contains nearly a dozen healthy specimen-sized or near specimen sized trees. Species include tulip tree, red maple, black gum, and red oak. The dominant size class of trees is 24-36 inches DBH, characteristic of a mature bottomland habitat. This urban forest represents a unique, perceived and realized, benefit to water quality, habitat and residents. The urbanized condition of Sligo Creek further warrants protection of urban forest resources when available.

6



Entire Property forest (Mature Bottomland Forest 24-36" DBH Dominant Size Class)

