



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

Staff Report: Site Plan Amendment 82004027A, Leesborough

CONSENT ITEM #:

MCPB HEARING

DATE: September 18, 2008

REPORT DATE: September 4, 2008

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Rose Krasnow, Chief *RAK*
 Robert Kronenberg, Supervisor *RAK*
 Development Review Division

FROM: Sandra Pereira, Senior Planner *SP*
 Development Review Division
 301.495.2186
 sandra.pereira@mncppc.org



APPLICATION DESCRIPTION: RT-15 zone; 13.86 acres; Amendment to improve Georgia Avenue frontage and Amherst Avenue access, and to upgrade internal landscape and hardscape features; located on Georgia Avenue, approximately 200 feet South of Arcola Avenue, Kensington-Wheaton.

APPLICANT: Batchellors Forest, LLC c/o Centex Homes

FILING DATE: February 20, 2008

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the Consent Amendment

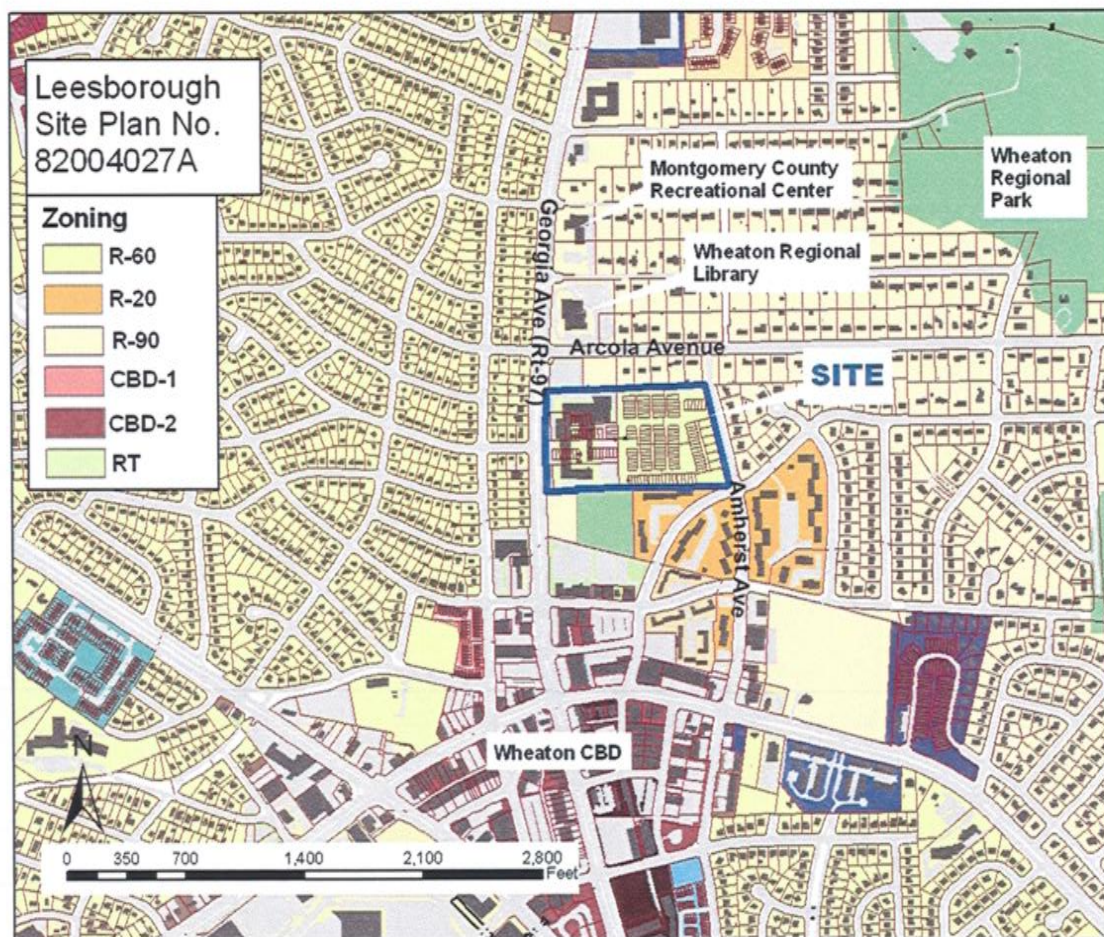
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Minor Amendment to improve the Georgia Avenue frontage, which includes adding retaining wall with an ornamental fence and entry piers, plantings, street trees; upgrade Leesborough Drive which includes adding special unit pavers and a terminus area; revise landscape design of Townhouse Mews area to include low retaining walls and edge plantings, and revise hardscape, landscape, and grading of Condominium Mews (Buildings 8 and 9) and Building 11.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Vicinity

The subject site is located south of the intersection of Arcola Avenue, directly fronting on Georgia Avenue to the west and Amherst Avenue to the east in Wheaton, Maryland. The property at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Arcola Avenue is the new location of the Wheaton Rescue Squad. Directly across Arcola Avenue, at the intersection of Georgia Avenue is the Wheaton Regional Library and its associated parking, and directly north of the Library is the Montgomery County Recreational Center containing the Wheaton Community Center and the Wheaton Youth Center.

The residential properties surrounding the subject site are all part of different blocks in the Blueridge Manor subdivision. The section to the north of the property is Block 5 and contains one-family detached units and is zoned R-90, while the section across Amherst Avenue is Block 1 and contains one-family residential properties and is zoned R-90. The residential subdivision across Georgia Avenue is known as Wheaton Hills and is zoned R-60. Southeast of the subject site is the Blueridge Manor apartment complex, a 2.5-3 –story brick building that is zoned R-20. The vacant WMATA site directly to the south is zoned R-90/TDR.



Vicinity Map

Site Analysis

The subject site was occupied by the Good Counsel High School, which has relocated to the Olney area. The school structures and associated facilities have been demolished, with the exception of the Rafferty Center to the north of the site. Currently, the site is under construction consistent with the approved Leesborough site plan. There are no known rare, threatened, or endangered species on site; there are no 100-year floodplains, stream buffers, wetlands, or steep slopes on site. There are no known historic properties or features on site.



AMENDMENT DESCRIPTION

Previous Approvals

This plan is subject to the binding elements of Local Map Amendment No. G-798, which was approved by the County Council on June 17, 2003 (Resolution No. 15-226), for the reclassification of 14.74 acres of the site from the R-90 Zone to the RT-15 Zone. Binding elements of the Re-Zoning Application include provisions addressing retention of the Rafferty Center, buffers to adjacent properties, establishment of community open space and numbers and types of units.

This plan is subject to the conditions of Preliminary Plan 120040680, which was approved for a maximum of 201 dwelling units, on November 4, 2004.

This plan is subject to the conditions of Site Plan 820040270, which was approved for 6 one-family detached dwelling units, 139 one-family attached units and 45 multi-family units, on November 4, 2004, except as modified herein.

Description of Amendments

The Applicant requests the following modifications to the Site Plan:

1. Georgia Avenue Frontage
 - a. Add a new retaining wall with an ornamental fence along the Georgia Avenue frontage which will hold the grades at street level and increase the usable area in front of the condominium units facing Georgia Avenue.
 - b. Upgrade entry features at Leesborough Drive with piers, signage and pavers.
 - c. Provide various access points along Georgia Avenue that are demarcated with piers.
 - d. Revise landscape design to include plantings along the retaining wall and fence, and entry features.
 - e. Replace approved stamped concrete with unit pavers at entry area subject to the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA) approval.
 - f. Add new staircase in front of south condo building to accommodate fire access.

2. Amherst Avenue Access
 - a. Add new entry piers as community entry markers.
 - b. Remove approved screen wall and replace it with screen planting.

3. Leesborough Drive (entry roadway from Georgia Avenue)
 - a. Replace approved stamped concrete with unit pavers at the sidewalks on Leesborough Drive.
 - b. Upgrade hardscape and landscape treatment for the sitting area at the terminus of Leesborough Drive to include special unit pavers, a trellis, and low site wall.

4. Condominium Mews (Buildings 8 and 9)
 - a. Add retaining wall to reduce the magnitude of the slope in front of Building 8.
 - b. Add traffic bearing rings to address potential emergency access concerns.
 - c. Adjust landscape, hardscape and grading design.

5. Condominium Building 11
 - a. Revise sidewalk, grading and retaining wall design to reduce the height of the wall. Lead walk to the condominium units is proposed through the wall.

6. Townhouse Mews (Lots 56 to 67 and 81 to 93)

The design of hardscape and landscape in this area has been changed substantially, partly because this area is no longer needed for emergency vehicular access.

 - a. Enhance design along the frontage of both north and south ends of the mews with a central staircase with landscape improvements and special unit pavers in the sidewalk, and retaining walls and piers framing the end units.
 - b. Re-design mews area to include low retaining walls and edge plantings on the west side and hedge plantings on the east side to create a clear separation of private and public spaces. The retaining walls on the west side take up grade on the high side to allow the central public space to be a consistent gentle grade from east to west and north to south.

- c. Design the central public area of the mews with a pattern of landscaped and lawn panels, parallel walks, and a central paved public plaza area defined by low walls, piers, and planting.
- d. Upgrade hardscape to special unit pavers.

PUBLIC NOTICE

A notice regarding the subject amendment was sent to all parties of record by the Applicant on February 27, 2008. The notice gave interested parties 15 days to review and comment on the amended site plan per Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance Section 59-D-3.7. Staff did receive an inquiry regarding the retaining wall with railing on Georgia Avenue proposed by this amendment. The concern was that this wall created the perception of a fenced-off community.

Staff explained that the grade difference between Georgia Avenue and the proposed units, especially on the south end, is significant, and that a retaining wall adequately addresses this condition by avoiding a condition of steep slopes, which could result in maintenance issues. Instead, the proposed retaining wall will create a larger, flatter area up at the street level, which allows for plantings, sidewalk, and street trees, while creating more usable space in front of the units facing Georgia Avenue. In addition, the treatment of this wall with a railing allows views into the site from Georgia Avenue.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS

The proposed modifications to the site plan will not alter the overall character or impact of the development with respect to the original findings of approval. Further, these modifications will not affect the compatibility of the development with respect to the surrounding neighborhood. Staff recommends approval of Site Plan Amendment 82004027A subject to the following conditions.

1. Prior to approval of the revised Certified Site Plan the following revisions must be made and/or information provided subject to Staff review and approval:
 - a. Indicate the locations and provide details of the signs signaling the internal private loop road circulation on Leesborough Circle as a one-way, counter clockwise.
 - b. Provide scored concrete material on the pathway on the Georgia Avenue right-of-way, except at the main entrance towards Leesborough Drive, as approved by the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA).
 - c. Add a street light fixture to the north side of the Rafferty Center consistent with the remaining light fixtures proposed on site.
 - d. Applicant shall provide the sidewalk connection north of the Rafferty Center to the proposed sidewalk on the adjacent property as shown on Mandatory Referral #03501-F&RS-1: Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad drawing plans.

APPENDICES

- A. Memorandum from MNCPPC Community Base Planning
- B. Draft Planning Board Resolution



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

August 25, 2008

MEMORANDUM

To: Sandra Pereira
Development Review Division

From: Michael Brown
Community-Based Planning Division

CC: Khalid Afzal
Community-Based Planning Division

Subject: Site Plan 82004027A, Leesborough

We have reviewed the revised drawings submitted by the applicant. In general, the staff concludes that the proposed development is consistent with the goals of land use stabilization and compatibility as outlined in the 1989 Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan.

The staff recommends a light fixture(s) be added to the north side of the Rafferty Center. This pathway will connect to the center's parking lot. Staff believes this route will also be commonly used by residents of the proposed development and the surrounding community to access the Rafferty Center and the Wheaton Regional Library.

Applicant should guarantee the sidewalk connection north of the Rafferty Center to the proposed sidewalk on the adjacent property as shown on Mandatory Referral #03501-F&RS-1: Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad drawing plans.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB No. 08-110
Site Plan No. 82004027A
Project Name: Leesborough
Hearing Date: September 18, 2008

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, pursuant to Montgomery County Code Division 59-D-3, the Montgomery County Planning Board ("Planning Board") is required to review amendments to approved site plans; and

WHEREAS, on February 20, 2008, Batchellors Forest, LLC c/o Centex Homes ("Applicant"), filed a site plan amendment application designated Site Plan No. 82004027A ("Amendment") for approval of the following modifications:

1. Georgia Avenue Frontage
 - a. Add a new retaining wall with an ornamental fence along the Georgia Avenue frontage which will hold the grades at street level and increase the usable area in front of the condominium units facing Georgia Avenue.
 - b. Upgrade entry features at Leesborough Drive with piers, signage and pavers.
 - c. Provide various access points along Georgia Avenue that are demarcated with piers.
 - d. Revise landscape design to include plantings along the retaining wall and fence, and entry features.
 - e. Replace approved stamped concrete with unit pavers at entry area subject to the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA) approval.
 - f. Add new staircase in front of south condo building to accommodate fire access.
2. Amherst Avenue Access
 - a. Add new entry piers as community entry markers.
 - b. Remove approved screen wall and replace it with screen planting.
3. Leesborough Drive (entry roadway from Georgia Avenue)
 - a. Replace approved stamped concrete with unit pavers at the sidewalks on Leesborough Drive.

Approved as to
Legal Sufficiency:

CS 9/5/08
8787 Georgia Avenue, N.C. 20910 Chairman's Office: 301.495.4605 Fax: 301.495.1320

www.MCParkandPlanning.org E-Mail: mcp-chairman@mncppc.org

- b. Upgrade hardscape and landscape treatment for the sitting area at the terminus of Leesborough Drive to include special unit pavers, a trellis, and low site wall.
4. Condominium Mews (Buildings 8 and 9)
 - a. Add retaining wall to reduce the magnitude of the slope in front of Building 8.
 - b. Add traffic bearing rings to address potential emergency access concerns.
 - c. Adjust landscape, hardscape and grading design.
5. Condominium Building 11
 - a. Revise sidewalk, grading and retaining wall design to reduce the height of the wall. Lead walk to the condominium units is proposed through the wall.
6. Townhouse Mews (Lots 56 to 67 and 81 to 93)

The design of hardscape and landscape in this area has been changed substantially, partly because this area is no longer needed for emergency vehicular access.

 - a. Enhance design along the frontage of both north and south ends of the mews with a central staircase with landscape improvements and special unit pavers in the sidewalk, and retaining walls and piers framing the end units.
 - b. Re-design mews area to include low retaining walls and edge plantings on the west side and hedge plantings on the east side to create a clear separation of private and public spaces. The retaining walls on the west side take up grade on the high side to allow the central public space to be a consistent gentle grade from east to west and north to south.
 - c. Design the central public area of the mews with a pattern of landscaped and lawn panels, parallel walks, and a central paved public plaza area defined by low walls, piers, and planting.
 - d. Upgrade hardscape to special unit pavers.

WHEREAS, following review and analysis of the Amendment by Planning Board staff ("Staff") and the staff of other applicable governmental agencies, Staff issued a memorandum to the Planning Board dated September 4, 2008 setting forth its analysis and recommendation for approval of the Amendment ("Staff Report"); and

WHEREAS, on September 18, 2008, Staff presented the Amendment to the Planning Board as a consent item for its review and action (the "Hearing"); and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, pursuant to the relevant provisions of Montgomery County Code Chapter 59, the Planning Board hereby adopts the Staff's recommendation and analysis set forth in the Staff Report and hereby approves the Site Plan No. 82004027A, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to approval of the revised Certified Site Plan the following revisions must be made and/or information provided subject to Staff review and approval:
 - a. Indicate the locations and provide details of the signs signaling the internal private loop road circulation on Leesborough Circle as a one-way, counter clockwise.
 - b. Provide scored concrete material on the pathway on the Georgia Avenue right-of-way, except at the main entrance towards Leesborough Drive, as approved by the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA).
 - c. Add a street light fixture to the north side of the Rafferty Center consistent with the remaining light fixtures proposed on site.
 - d. Applicant shall provide the sidewalk connection north of the Rafferty Center to the proposed sidewalk on the adjacent property as shown on Mandatory Referral #03501-F&RS-1: Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad drawing plans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution incorporates by reference all evidence of record, including maps, drawings, memoranda, correspondence, and other information; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Amendment shall remain valid as provided in Montgomery County Code § 59-D-3.8; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the date of this written resolution is _____ (which is the date that this resolution is mailed to all parties of record); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any party authorized by law to take an administrative appeal must initiate such an appeal within thirty days of the date of this written opinion, consistent with the procedural rules for the judicial review of administrative agency decisions in Circuit Court (Rule 7-203, Maryland Rules).

* * * * *

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on motion of Commissioner _____, seconded by Commissioner _____, with Commissioners _____ (list) voting in favor of the motion, with Commissioner(s) _____ (list) dissenting, Commissioner(s) _____ (list) abstaining, Commissioner(s) _____ (list) being absent or being temporarily absent, at its regular meeting held on Thursday, _____, 200., in Silver Spring, Maryland.