



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

MCPB
Item #
7/16/09

July 2, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief *JAC*
Urban Design and Preservation Division

FROM: Calvin Nelson, Jr., Planner Coordinator/Urban Designer *CN*
Urban Design and Preservation Division

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 09718-F&S-01: Gaithersburg Library Renovation, - 18330 Montgomery Village Avenue, T-S Zone, 1985 Approved and Adopted Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVAL to transmit the following comments to Montgomery County Department of General Services:

1. Schedule two of the additional staff members to leave the site outside of the weekday, evening peak period between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m.
2. Comply with approved Tree Save Plan 42009193E.

DISCUSSION

Project Location

The library is located just outside of the City of Gaithersburg, on the southwest corner of the intersection of Montgomery Village Avenue (MD 124) and Christopher Avenue – Lost Knife Road, in Montgomery Village. The three-acre site is zoned T-S, Town Sector, and it is developed with a one-story, 33,700 square foot brick building framed by an L-shaped parking lot with 146 parking spaces. The site is well landscaped with a number of shade trees located around the library building and within the parking lot.

Properties surrounding the site include: Park Place Condominiums located along the site's boundary to the west; the Christopher Court Condominiums located north of the site across Christopher Avenue; and the Montvale Center office building located to the southwest. The Montgomery Village Day Care Center and the Lakeforest Regional Shopping Mall are located across Montgomery Village Avenue from the site.

Project Description

The existing structure will receive an extensive renovation, comprising approximately 64,238 square feet. The building's interior will be gutted, and new mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems will be installed along with new interior furnishings. The basement of the library will expand to about 9,000 square feet to house new mechanical and electrical systems.

The first floor of the library will expand to just over 43,000 square feet. The children's library and the teen and adult areas will all increase in size. Meeting rooms will now be located on a new second floor level. New features proposed for the first floor include a Language Discover Center, group study rooms, tutor rooms, a multi-media area, a computer lab, and a walk-up window to return and pick up library materials.

A 7,925 square-foot second-floor level will be added to the library. The Gilchrist Center, a new program for the Gaithersburg Library, will be operated by the Department of Recreation, and will provide services for newly immigrated residents of the County. The 1,500 square-foot Center includes two classrooms, two consultation offices, and other support areas. Three additional meeting rooms are also located on the second floor. A movable partition separates two of the rooms which can be configured to create one large meeting space. A loft area for mechanical systems is located above the second floor. The roofline of the loft adds a distinctive architectural element to the building. The renovated library would be approximately 36 feet high at the loft level.

The parking lot will be modified to provide twelve additional parking spaces and a convenient book drop off and pickup area. New street trees, lighting and landscaping in and around the parking areas will also be provided.

The two entrances to the library site will remain. The Christopher Avenue entrance will be modified with a concrete lane divider for increased safety and the sidewalk will be realigned. Sidewalks are located on Montgomery Village Avenue and Christopher Avenue.

Staffing levels at the library are expected to remain about the same, although there may be two additional staff for the new Gilchrist Center. As of August, 2008, the library had 28 staff positions, 17 full time positions and 11 part time positions. The hours of operation for the library are not expected to change when the library reopens.

While the library is being renovated, some of the library services will take place at a smaller interim facility with the location yet to be determined. Construction of the new facility is expected to take about a year.

ANALYSIS

Master Plan Conformance

The proposed library conforms to the guidance in the master plan. The 1985 Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan (p. 96) notes that this facility should adequately serve the projected needs of the Community.

Development Standards

The library site is zoned T-S, Town Sector zone. The T-S Zone is one of the planned unit development zones. These zones have fewer specific requirements and restrictions than other zones and permit more flexibility of design and use, subject to a binding plan proposed by the applicant and approved by the District Council as a part of the granting of the zoning category.

The site plan shows 158 parking spaces will be provided on the site, twelve more than what currently exists. Section 59-E3.7 of the Zoning Ordinance requires 2.5 parking spaces for each 1,000 square feet of total floor area for a library. The total floor area for the building is 61,634 square feet, requiring a total of 155 parking spaces.

Building Location and Compatibility

While the renovation of the library will be quite extensive, careful planning went into expanding the building's footprint to minimize impact on the site. Only a few of the large shade trees on the site will have to be removed. The proposed project will remain compatible with the adjacent condominiums, office building, day care center and Lakeforest Mall.

Environment

The Environmental Planning Division finds that the project site is exempt from Article II of the Montgomery County Code, Chapter 22A (Forest Conservation Law), Section 22A-5(t) because the project is a modification to an existing developed property in which; (1) no more than 5,000 square feet of forest will be cleared, (2) the modification does not affect any forest in a stream buffer or located on property in a special protection area which must submit a water quality plan and (3) the modification does not require approval of a new subdivision plan.

The project is not subject to a Forest Conservation Plan, but is subject to a Tree Save Plan under Section 22A-6(b). The Tree Save Plan No. 42009193E submitted in support of the exemption request has been approved. Any changes from the approved tree save plan may constitute grounds to rescind or amend any subsequent modifications planned to the approved plan, a separate amendment must be submitted to M-NCPPC for review and approval prior to those activities occurring.

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certification

Montgomery County requires LEED Silver certification for all public buildings, and the library will become LEED Certified – Silver. To achieve a Silver rating, a 2,100 square-foot green roof, energy efficient windows and other sustainable design strategies to maximize energy efficiency and minimize negative impact on the environment will be provided.

Transportation

The Transportation Planning Staff reviewed this application and recommend the following comment as part of the Adequate Public Facilities (APF) test for transportation requirements related to the subject Mandatory Referral application:

The Applicant should schedule two of the additional staff members to leave the site outside of the weekday, evening peak period between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m.

Transportation Planning staff find that the subject Mandatory Referral application would satisfy the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) and the Policy Area Mobility Review (PAMR) tests.

Community Outreach

The Gaithersburg Library held a public meeting in June 2007, to gather suggestions from residents about the services to be delivered in the renovated facility. Community feedback was recorded and analyzed for incorporation into design options. The library also hosted public meetings on June 17 and November 5, 2008, to show and discuss the proposed plans for the renovation of the library. The proposed renovation plans are also featured on the library's website.

On June 19, 2009, Staff sent out notices to local citizen associations, adjoining and nearby property owners and other interested parties of the submittal, noting the date of the Planning Board hearing.

CONCLUSION

Based on information provided by the applicant and the analysis contained in this report, staff concludes that the Mandatory Referral meets the applicable standards and guidelines for the environment, the applicable guidelines for adequate public facilities, the applicable requirements of the T-S Zone and the land use recommendations of the Approved and Adopted 1985 Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan. Staff recommends approval of the Mandatory Referral with the comments listed at the front of this report.

Attachments:

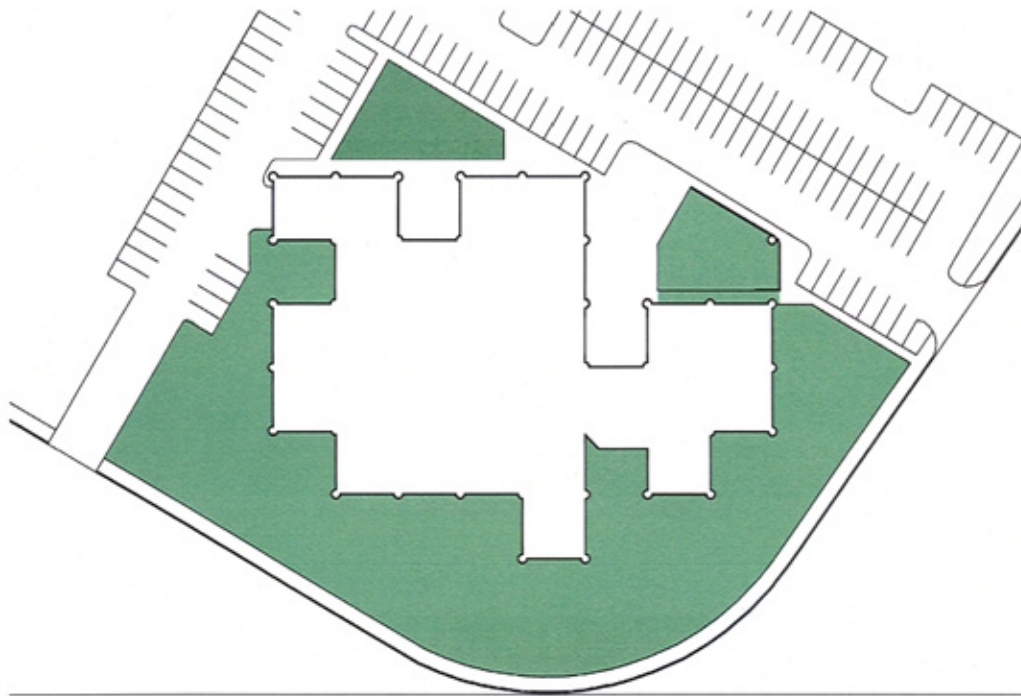
1. Vicinity Map
2. Existing Site Plan with Proposed Additions
3. Proposed Landscape Plan
4. Proposed First Floor Plan
5. Proposed Second Floor Plan
6. Existing and Proposed Building Massing
7. Building Section and Perspectives
8. Environmental Planning memo dated 6/9/09

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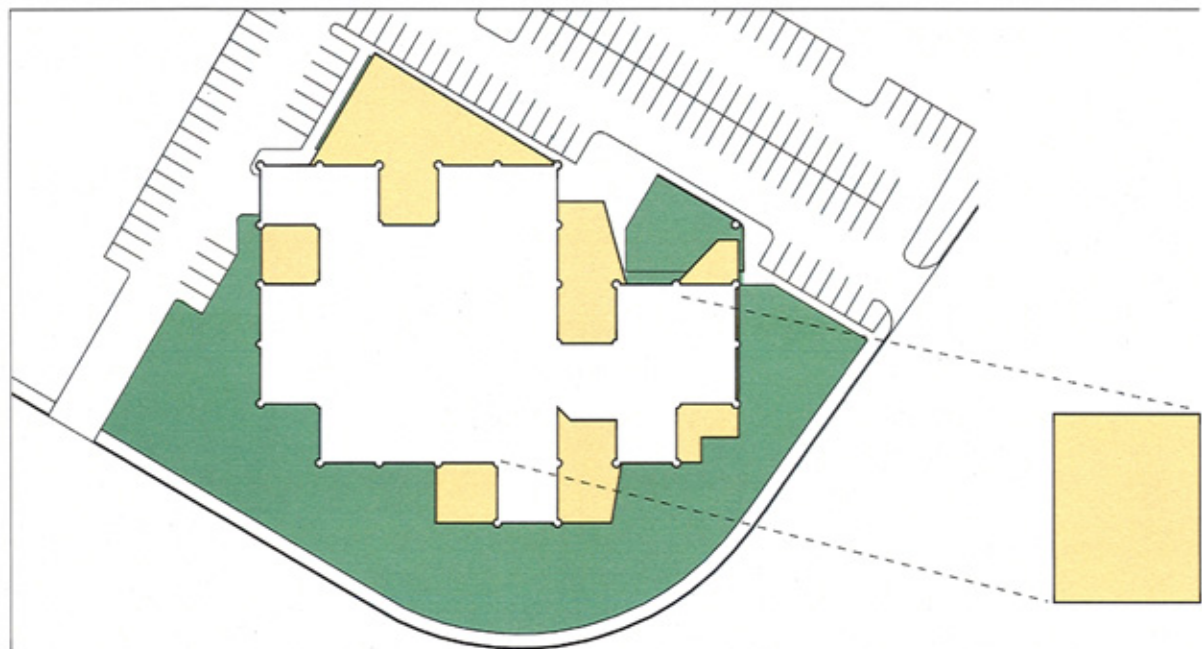
Vicinity Map



Existing Site Plan and Proposed Additions

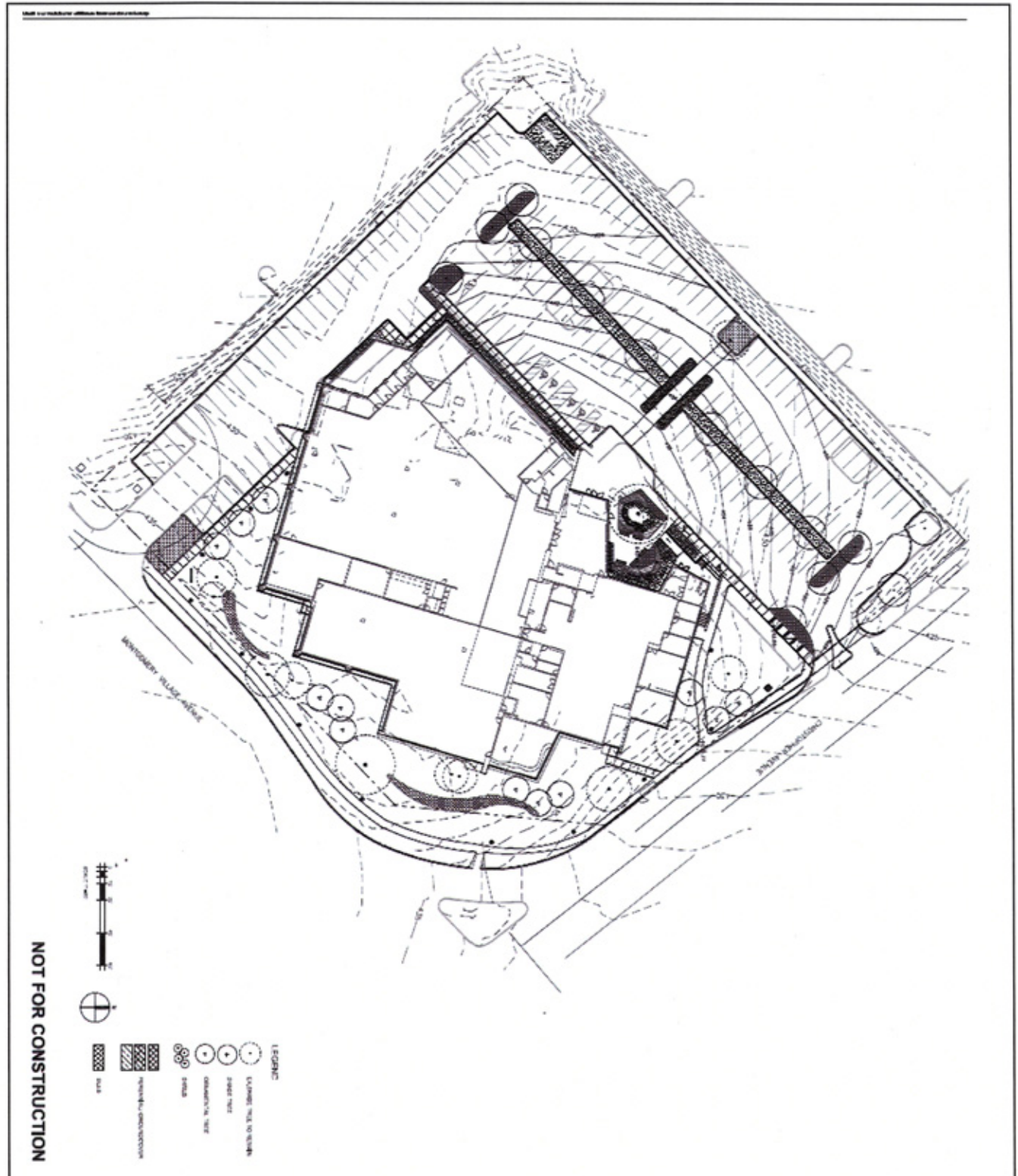


Existing Site Plan

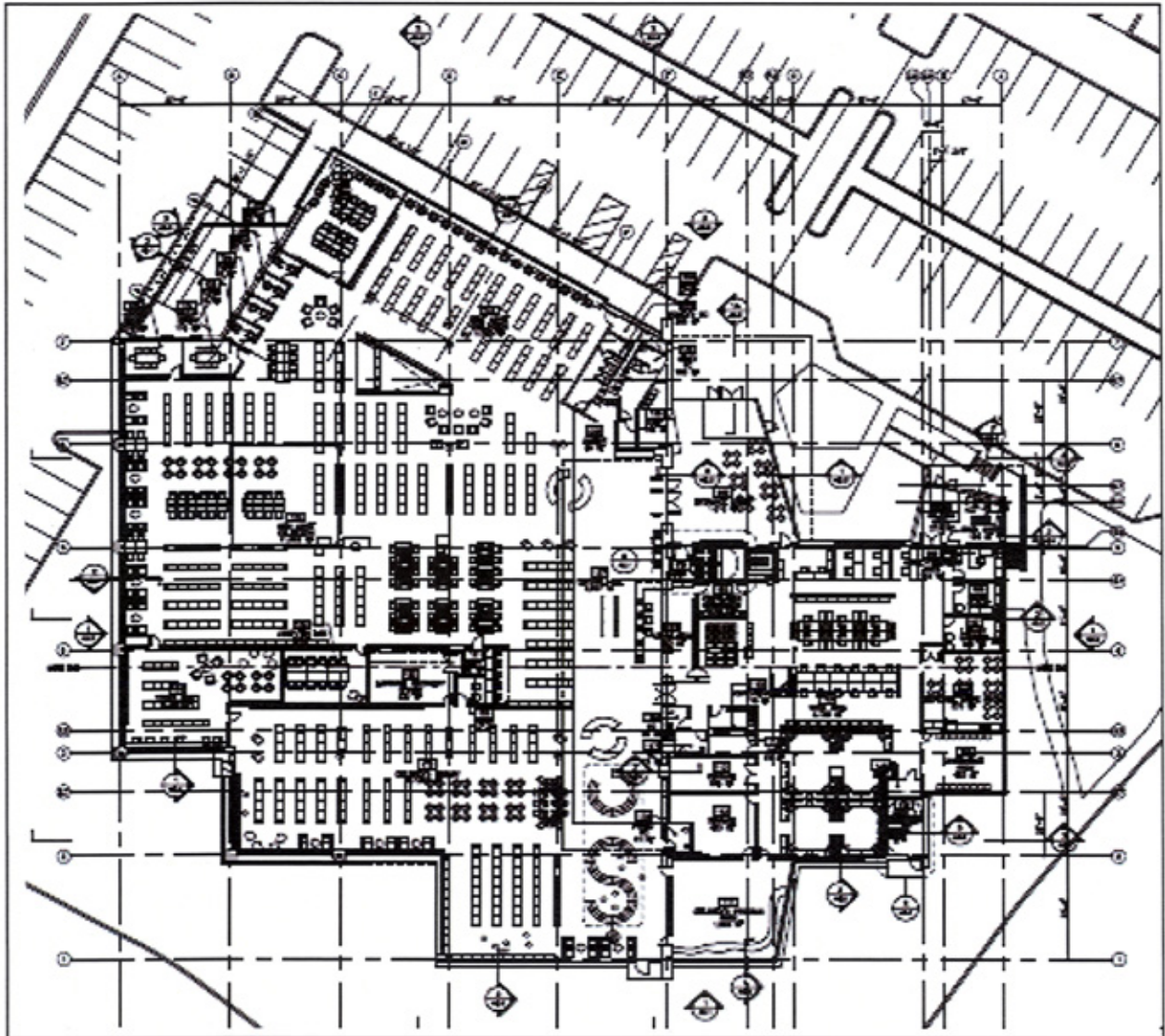


Existing Site Plan with Proposed Addition

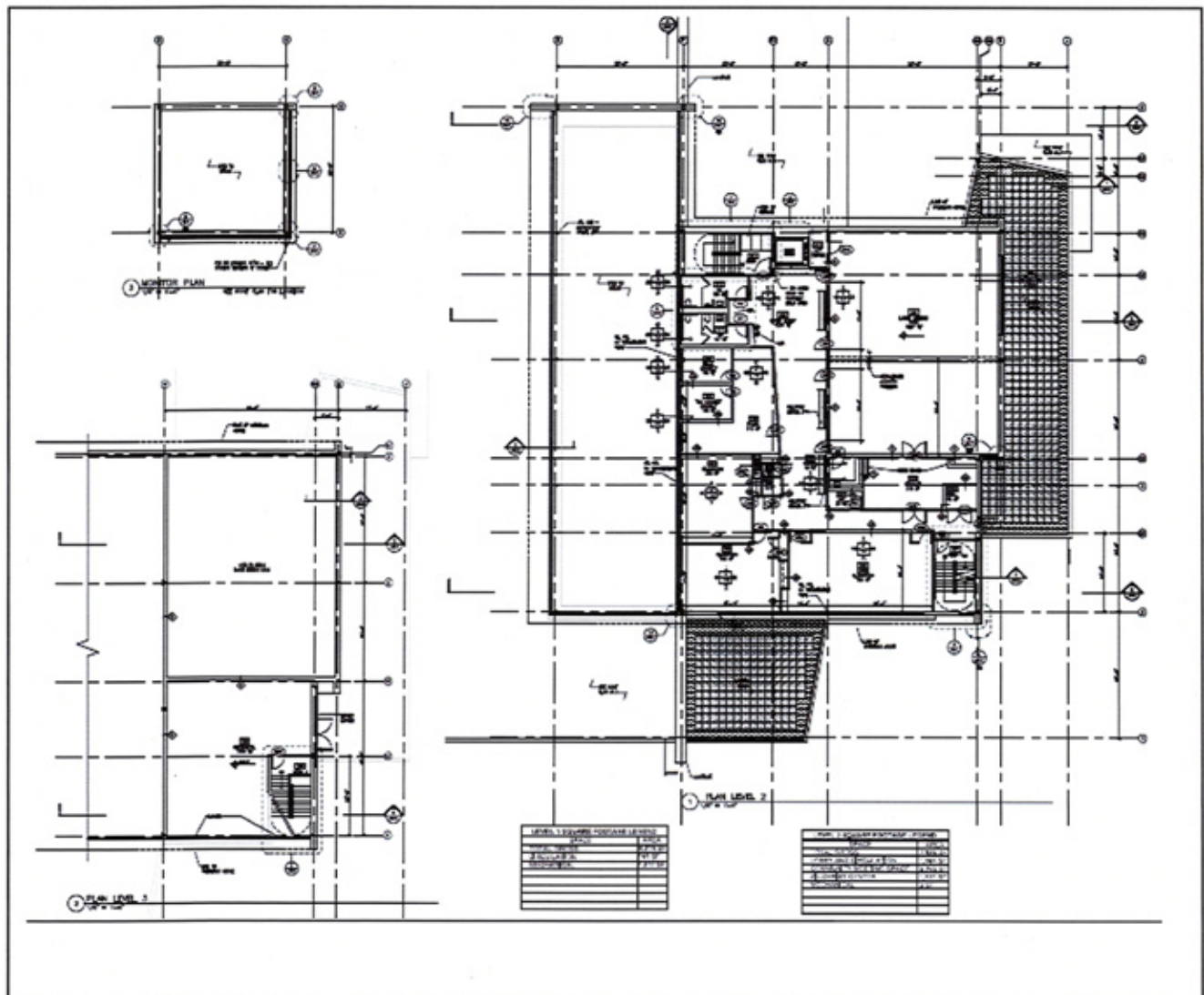
Proposed Landscape Plan



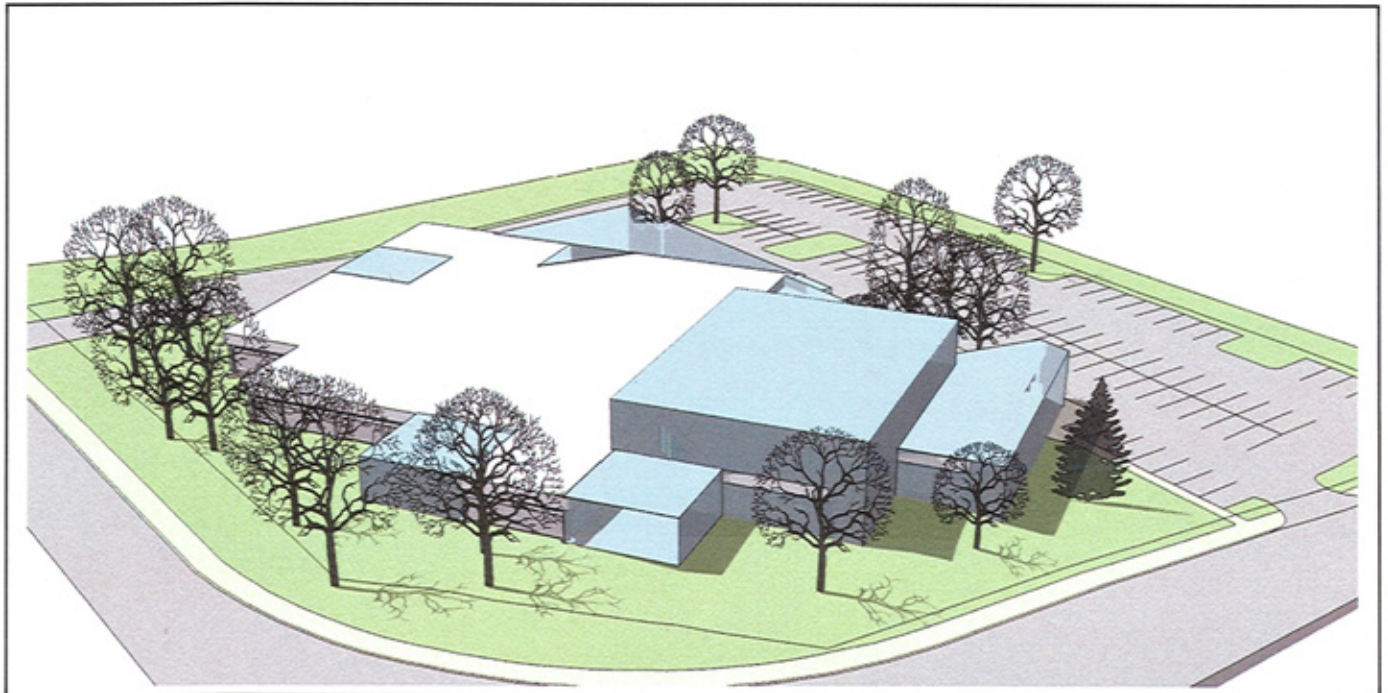
Proposed First Floor Plan



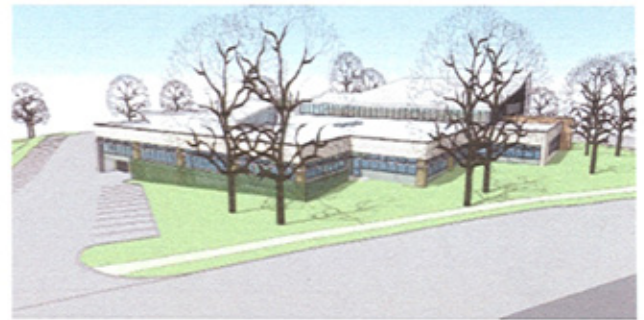
Proposed Second Floor Plan



Existing and Proposed Building Massing



Building Section and Perspectives



GAITHERSBURG LIBRARY

Whitman, Requardt & Associates Ann Beha Architects

Environmental Planning memo



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

June 9, 2009

Mr. Frank Roberts, P.E.
Montgomery County Dept. of General Services
101 Monroe St., 11th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Forest Conservation Exemption
Property Name: Gaithersburg Library Expansion
Plan Number: 42009193E

Dear Mr. Roberts:

Based on the review by Environmental Planning staff of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the request for a Forest Conservation Exemption submitted to M-NCPPC on May 29, 2009 for the plan identified above, is confirmed. The project site is exempt from Article II of the Montgomery County Code, Chapter 22A (Forest Conservation Law), Section 22A-5(f) because the project is a modification to an existing developed property in which; (1) no more than 5,000 square feet of forest will be cleared, (2) the modification does not affect any forest in a stream buffer or located on property in a special protection area which must submit a water quality plan and (3) the modification does not require approval of a new subdivision plan.

The project is not subject to a Forest Conservation Plan, but is subject to a Tree Save Plan under Section 22A-6(b). The Tree Save Plan 42009193E submitted in support of the exemption request is approved.

Any changes from the approved tree save plan may constitute grounds to rescind or amend any approval actions taken and to take appropriate enforcement actions. If there are any subsequent modifications planned to the approved plan, a separate amendment must be submitted to M-NCPPC for review and approval prior to those activities occurring.

If you have any questions regarding these actions, please feel free to contact me at 301-495-4571 or douglas.johnsen@mncppc-mc.org.

Sincerely,

Doug Johnsen, RLA
Environmental Planning

Cc: 42009193E
Ms. Laura Callens (Whitman, Requardt & Assoc.)
Calvin Nelson (M-NCPPC)

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