



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
07.10.03
Item #5

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 3, 2003
TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: Michael Ma, Supervisor *Ma*
Joseph R. Davis, Division Chief *JRD*
Development Review Division
FROM: Mary Beth O'Quinn *mbog*
Planning Department Staff
(301) 495-1322

REVIEW TYPE: Site Plan Review
CASE #: 8-03035
PROJECT NAME: Potomac Crest
APPLYING FOR: Approval of 21 One-Family Detached Homes
REVIEW BASIS: Article 59-D of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance
Section 50 of the Subdivision Regulations
Reduced-width tertiary street: Section 50-26 (h)(2)

ZONE: R-90 (Cluster)
LOCATION: Seven Locks Road, 150 feet south of Declaration Lane
MASTER PLAN: Potomac Subregion, May 1980
APPLICANT: The Magruder Companies (Scott Reed)
FILING DATE: April 29, 2003
HEARING DATE: July 10, 2003



STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of 21 one-family homes, subject to the following conditions:

1. Stormwater Management
Conditions of MCDPS stormwater management concept approval dated December 12, 2002.
2. Transportation
Provide detailed plan showing the following, subject to review and approval by MNCPPC staff, the Department of Permitting Services, and the Department of Public Works and Transportation:
 - a. Road improvements and pavement markings for Seven Locks Road, including deceleration and acceleration lane at Declaration Lane;
 - b. Sidewalk placement and connection with existing and proposed landscaping/street trees for Declaration Lane and Patriot Lane;
 - c. Extension of the sidewalk on Seven Locks Road to Tuckerman Lane; street trees within curbside grass panel every 40-50 feet;

- d. Extension of the sidewalk around the cul-de-sac of the internal public street.
3. Environmental
 Conditions of MNCPPC EPD memo dated May 30, 2003, including:
- a. Shift the house location on Lot 21 toward the street to allow sufficient critical root zone for Tree #16A (33-inch red oak);
 - b. Provide alternative forestation if planting is not allowed within the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission right-of-way.

4. Signature Set

Prior to signature set approval provide the following information subject to staff review and approval:

a. Site Plan

- i. Site Plan Signature Set shall show all easement lines, LODs, Right-of-Way dimensions and centerlines; delineate SWM facility as a separate parcel;
- ii. Provide details for fencing, including materials (all fences to be constructed of masonry materials); show top and bottom elevations for walls;
- iii. Provide the development program inspection schedule;
- iv. Street trees 40-50 feet on center along all public streets.

b. Landscape Plan

- i. Provide shade street trees every 40-45 feet along Patriot Lane, around the cul-de-sac and within the cul-de-sac island; ornamental trees may be used at the entrance features and within the front yards;
- ii. Provide evergreen screening for the rear of Lots 10-17 with exposure to Foxwood Court (unless fence extends along those rear property lines).

c. Lighting Plans

Provide lighting details and specifications, including lamp type, wattage, house shields, and mounted height; include as part of landscape drawing.

3. Site Plan Enforcement Agreement

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:
 - i. Street tree planting must progress as street construction is completed, but no later than six months after completion of the units adjacent to those streets;
 - ii. Community-wide pedestrian pathways and recreation facilities must be completed prior to seventy percent occupancy of each phase of the development;
 - iii. Clearing and grading to correspond to the construction phasing, to minimize soil erosion;
 - iv. Coordination of each section of the development and roads;
 - v. Phasing of dedications, stormwater management, sediment/erosion control, recreation, forestation, community paths, or other features;
- b. Forest Conservation Plan shall satisfy all conditions of approval prior to recording of plat and DPS issuance of sediment and erosion control permit;
- c. No clearing or grading prior to M-NCPPC approval of signature set of plans.

SITE PLAN REVIEW ISSUES:

1. Stormwater Management

The site features noticeable grade drops of about 10-15 feet from the high point at the site's center to its western and southern boundaries. Both of these boundaries adjoin the Foxwood Court Condominium neighborhood at the existing retaining walls. In general, the aggregate topography of the site itself and the Foxwood Community slope down to the east toward the Snakeden Stream, a tributary of the Cabin John Creek. The long forested finger of the site's south end reaches toward the stream, with a total drop in grade of almost 60 feet. This existing topography has established a flow pattern that empties naturally onto the adjoining site, and sequentially from that site into the streambed that lies approximately 500 feet from the site.

Applicant Position: The SWM concept addresses this concern.

Community Position: The Foxwood Court Home Owners Association has expressed concern that the existing run-off flow will be increased by the impact of the proposed development. Staff's communications with community representatives provided an explanation of the SWM concept proposed. Community representatives have expressed satisfaction with the proposed SWM design and facility location.

Staff Recommendation: The Department of Permitting Services reviewed the stormwater management plan and has stated that the design engineering as proposed adequately addresses the site's drainage. The flows created by the existing conditions and any additional flows for Lots 9-18 (the highest elevations) will be accumulated and diverted via underground piping to the on-site SWM detention pond. Water from Lots 4-8 will accumulate at a rate that does not require mitigation. Water quality for Lots 9-18 will be met through surface sand filters. This design will alleviate the flow to the neighboring property.

Water quantity and quality control for Lots 1, 2, 3, and 21 will be satisfied by retaining the existing natural water flow patterns into the conservation easement areas.

2. Setbacks and Unit Orientations

The proposed development, linear in form, parallels the existing linear form of Foxwood Court, but at a noticeably higher elevation. The community has expressed concern about the setback of the new houses from the common property line, and the effectiveness of the intervening open space.

Applicant Position: The design effectively addresses the issues of unit orientation, wooded buffers, and compatibility.

Community Position: The Foxwood Community representative has asked about the orientation of the new houses, with particular concern about the rear setbacks. Other concerns expressed include building height.

Staff Recommendation: Staff supports the applicant's plan, which provides a deeper setback of 30 feet (along the rear of Lots 11-18) than the 25 feet required for rear yards by the standard R-90 development; the 30 foot setback provides significantly more open space at the rear of the lots adjoining the condominiums.

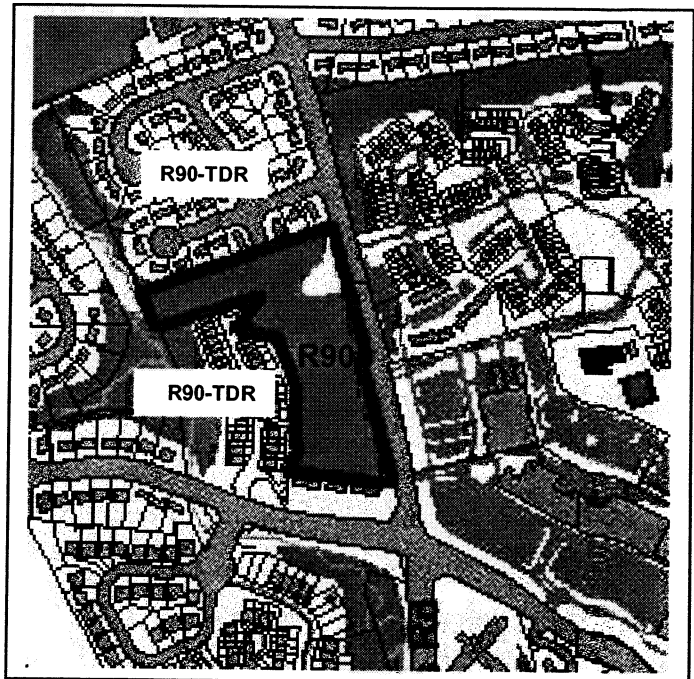
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Surrounding Vicinity

SITE



Potomac Crest Vicinity Map

The subject property, located in the Inverness Knolls neighborhood, lies within the Potomac Subregion Master Plan Area. The parcel is zoned R-90, while the surrounding developments of condominiums are zoned R-90/TDR. The site lies approximately 1-1/2 miles west of I-270, 400 feet north of Tuckerman Lane, within 1/4 mile of the Cabin John Mall and Shopping Center, and within 1/2 mile of the nearest facilities at Cabin John Park. The Young Israel of Potomac congregation is located approximately 1/4 mile north on Seven Locks Road. Neighborhood landmarks include Winston Churchill High School on Tuckerman Lane; Cabin John Middle School, Bells Mill Elementary School, the McLean School of Maryland, and the Heights School all lie within approximately a one-mile radius of the site.



Planimetric Map showing zoning

Site Description



Aerial photograph of the site and surrounding neighborhoods

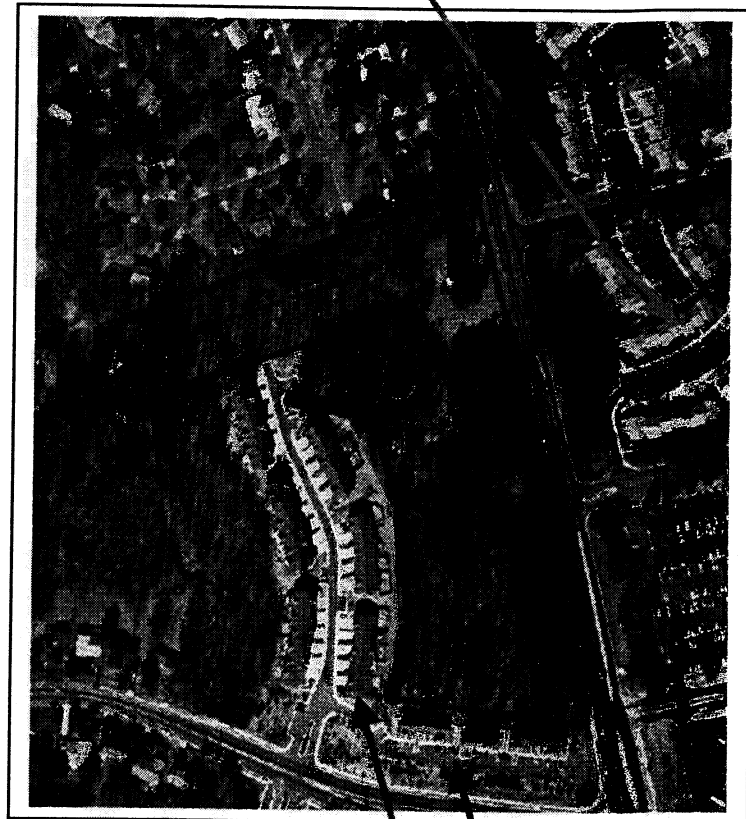
Seven Locks Road forms the eastern boundary of the 9.1-acre site. The long L-shaped property, features two legs, one approximately 1,000 by 300 feet running north-south, and the other 150 x 300 feet. This "short leg" features a sizable stand of high priority forest.

The remaining portion of the site is currently unimproved; the site contains a number of healthy trees, some within a wooded buffer that will be retained along Seven Locks Road. The low point of the site is located at the southeastern corner, which will feature the future SWM detention pond.

The most significant aspect of the existing site is its topography which slopes significantly to the south and somewhat to the east, with both grades pointing toward the adjacent development. The entire site is a tributary to the Snakeden Creek, part of the Cabin John Creek system. The streambed lies about 500 feet west of the site boundary.

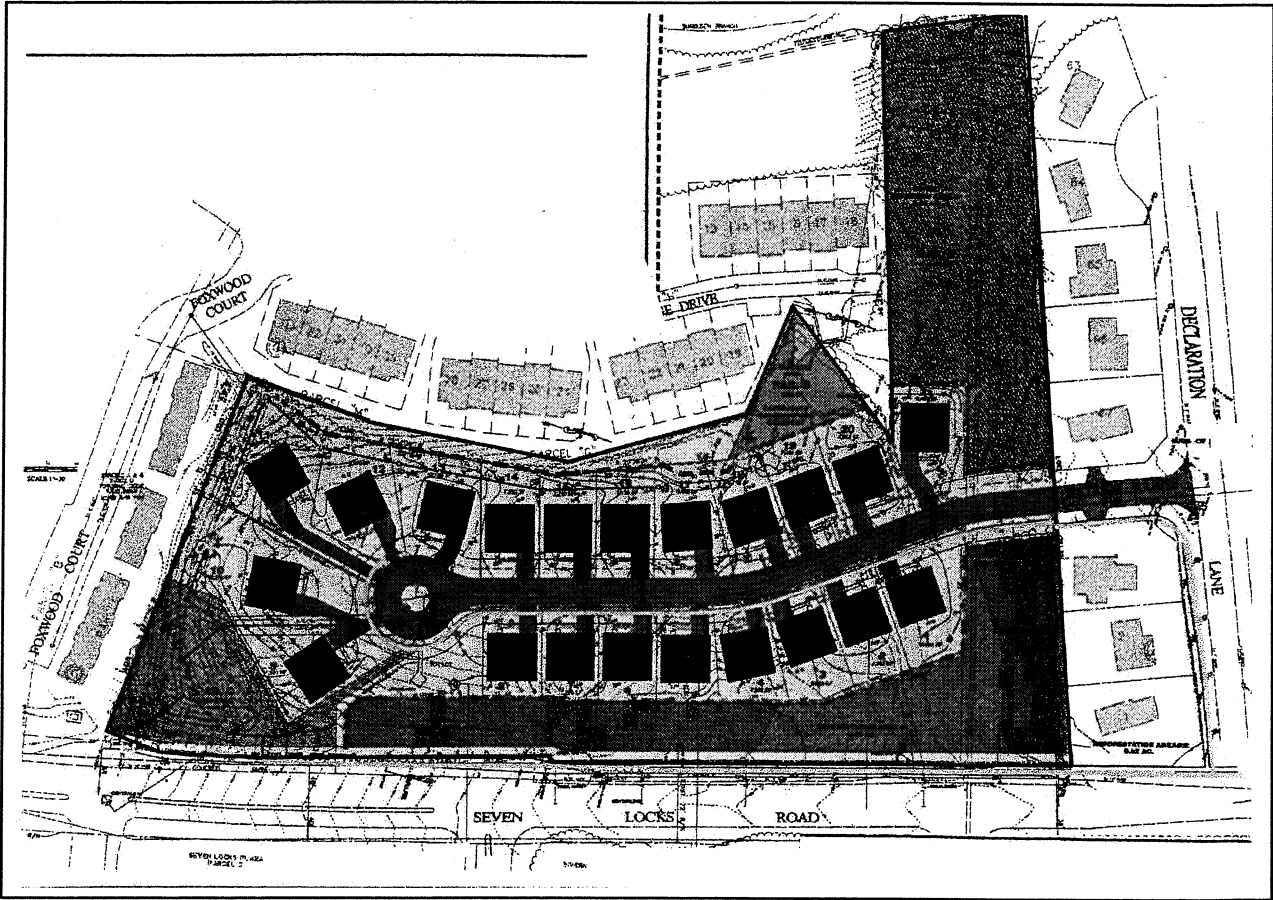
Aerial photograph of the site. The red arrows show the downward direction of the gradients

Inverness Knolls Subdivision at Seven Locks Rd



Foxwood Court Condominiums

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposal



The housing proposed is comprised of a linear arrangement of tightly spaced houses, double loaded along an internal public road that terminates with houses wrapping the cul-de-sac. The internally focused neighborhood is buffered with wooded landscape on all sides. The 50-foot buffer along the Seven Locks Road frontage, proposed as a Category I Conservation Easement, is supplemented by a noise abatement wall that is placed directly behind the houses, inside the buffer. The SWM pond, with additional landscaping, will occupy the SE corner of the site. The primary conservation area is provided in the “short” leg of the L, that is, the land extension that runs east-west at the north end of the site. This area provided approximately 1.5 acres of high priority forest. The proposal provides 2.36 acres of on-site forestation and 0.52 acres of on-site reforestation.

The area west of Lot 20, proposed for a Category II Conservation Easement, forms part of the setback buffer between the proposed development and the neighboring Foxwood Court. The setbacks have been carefully considered, and provide a minimum of 65 feet of distance between the proposed house (Lot 14) and the closest adjoining condominium residence. Staff recommends additional landscaping within the setbacks along the west and south property boundaries to enhance the natural features of the site. In addition, staff recommends the use of full shade trees along the internal street and cul-de-sac island, and Seven Locks Road.

For the Planning Board’s consideration, the proposal features a reduced-width tertiary street; the waivers for the over-length cul-de-sac, and a sidewalk on one side of this internal public street were approved by the Planning Board in January 2003 as part of the preliminary plan review.

Prior Approvals

Preliminary Plan 1-02119 was approved by the Planning Board on January 9, 2003.

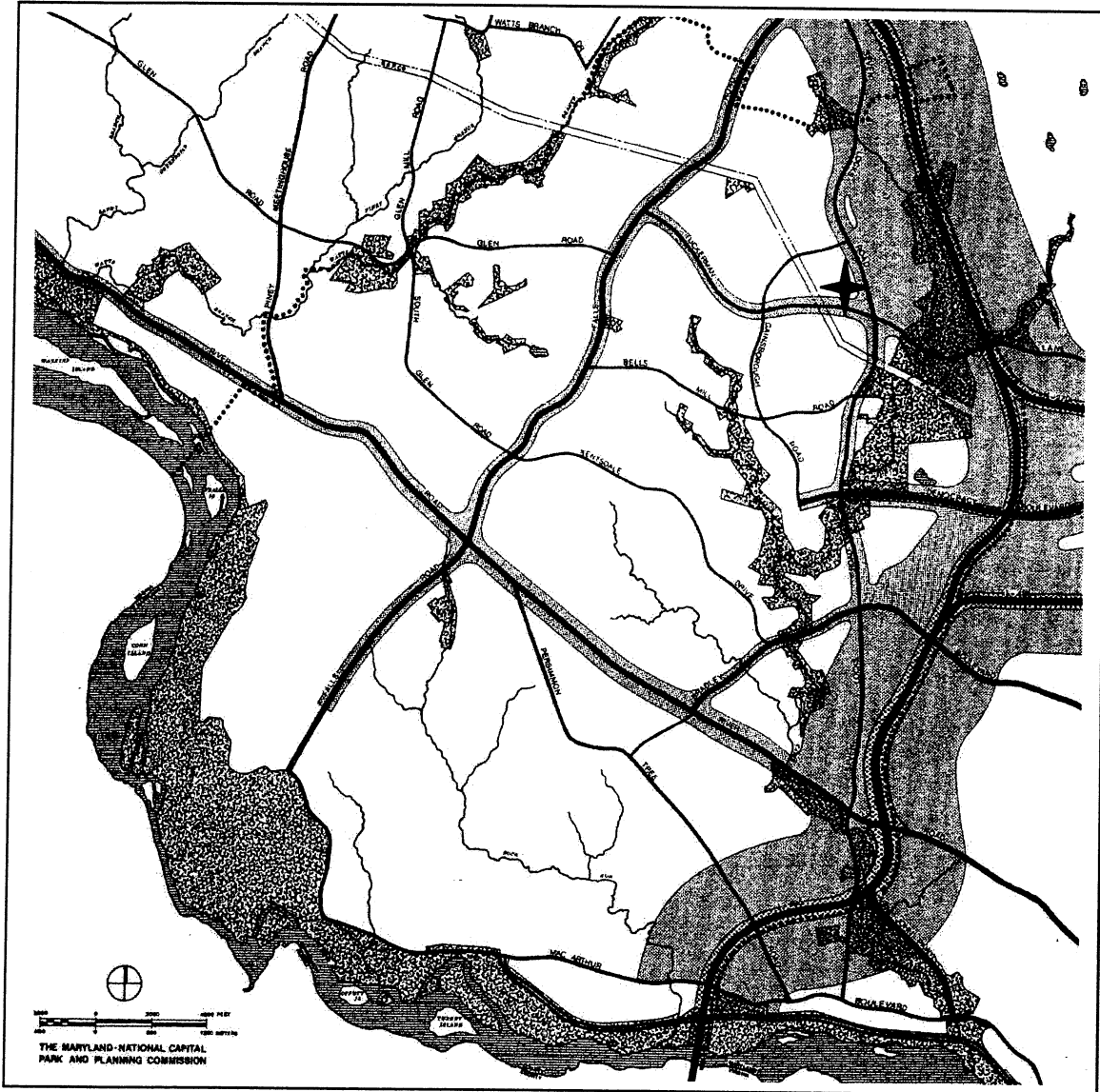
ANALYSIS: Conformance to Development Standards

Project Data Table Potomac Crest - Site Plan 8-03035 Development Standard - R-90 Cluster	Required/Permitted	Proposed
Gross Site Area	5.0 acres minimum	9.10 acres
Net Site Area		8.44 acres
Dedication to Public Use		0.66 acres
Lot Area	5,000 sf minimum	6,339 sf minimum
Density	3.6 units/acre max	2.3 units/acre
Setbacks		
Building setback from street ROW (shown on Master Plan)	25 feet minimum	25 feet
Side Yard	0 feet	5 feet
Rear Yard	0 feet	15 feet
Subdivision Boundary	30 feet minimum	30 feet
Building Height	2.5 stories/35 feet max	2.5 stories/35 feet max
Forest Retention	20% (1.8 acre min.)	2.34 acres min.
Impervious Area		25% (2.26 acres)

ANALYSIS: Sector Plan Conformance

The proposal conforms to these Potomac Subregion Master Plan recommendations:

- Retain a 50-foot wooded buffer along Seven Locks Road
- Extend Patriot Lane to serve the subject site, with no access from Seven Locks Road (requires the over-length cul-de-sac)
- Provide noise mitigation for traffic noise emanating from Seven Locks Road



NOISE IMPACT AREAS

- Areas Exposed To L_{eq} Values Of 70 dBA Or Greater Due To Traffic Noise
- Areas Exposed To L_{eq} Values Of 55 dBA Or Greater Due To Traffic Noise
- Area Potentially Exposed To Noise Levels Of 55dBA And Above Due To Quarry Operation

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. See Project Data Table above.*
3. *The locations of the buildings 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 location of the buildings and the disposition of open spaces and pedestrian ways are adequate and safe. The linear layout efficiently solves the site's problems of access and unit orientation created by the shape of the parcel and by the locations of the existing adjacent residential development. The internal focus of this community will allow the preserved forest buffers along the road frontage to remain the primary visible public amenity of this site.

b. Open Space

Attractive and functional open space is provided for this compact one-family home community through the provision of forested areas protected by conservation easements. The design, with its tightly spaced linear form, offers efficient and generous open spaces that create a well-balanced site plan and preserves significant forest for the public and the surrounding neighbors

The significant forestation areas are thoughtfully dimensioned for distance, recreational use, and screening. Attractive landscaping frames this open space in a compatible scale with appropriate plantings.

c. Landscaping and Lighting

Formal landscaping and lighting provide the streetscape for the internal public street. The proposal features ornamental trees as the street trees. Staff recommends full size shade trees for this street—a species such as Zelkova, Red Oak, or London Plane. Staff also recommends street trees along Seven Locks Road to compliment the public sidewalk connection to Tuckerman Lane and additional screening landscaping along the rear yard setbacks adjacent to the condominiums.

d. Recreation

The proposal is exempt from recreation requirements because the number of units in the development is less than twenty-five.

e. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

The vehicular and pedestrian circulation, a linear form with a loop cul-de-sac, offers safe and efficient means of ingress and egress to the site.

Staff supports the applicant's request for the Waiver from a 50-foot road width. The use of the reduced-width tertiary road allows significantly more tree preservation and a superior utilization of the site's land area. The

lesser road dimension (27.33 feet) will allow the houses to be located at a greater setback from Seven Locks Road, resulting in better noise mitigation and greater compatibility to the adjoining neighborhoods. The sidewalk on one side of the road provides efficient and safe means of pedestrian access for the limited traffic levels anticipated with good levels of sight distance.

4. Each structure and use is compatible with other uses and other site plans and with existing and proposed adjacent development.

The proposed development represents a desirable housing component within the Potomac Subregion. While higher density housing is the predominate type in the immediately adjacent areas, the siting of these one-family homes along Seven Locks Road provides a compatible transition between similar homes to the east and the Foxwood Court Community. The buffers provided on all sides offer a continuity of landscaping and woodlands—a natural feature that is consistently sought within this master plan area. The conservation of the forest at the northeast portion of the site will preserve a high quality forest for the surrounding neighbors.

5. *The site plan meets all applicable requirements of Chapter 22A regarding forest conservation.*

The applicant's proposal, as conditioned, meets forest conservation requirements.



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mary Beth O'Quinn, Development Review

FROM: Mark Pfefferle, Planning Coordinator *mp*
Countywide Planning Division

DATE: July 1, 2003

SUBJECT: Potomac Crest, Site Plan # 8-03035

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of site plan #8-03035.

DISCUSSION

The subject property is west of Seven Locks Road, east of Deborah Drive, south of Declaration Lane, and north of Tuckerman Lane. The subject property is approximately 9.1 acres and L-shaped. The site includes 6.5 acres of forest with the majority of the non-forested portions of the site located along Seven Locks Road and across from Coddle Harbor Drive. There are two buildings onsite, as well as a cemetery. A 50-foot wide WSSC right of way, which includes a 48-inch water main, runs perpendicular to the Seven Locks Road and cuts through the subject property. The subject property is within the Cabin John Creek sub watershed, a Use I stream. The Snakeden Branch, a tributary to Cabin John Creek is outside the subject property, but the environmental buffers for this tributary extend onto the subject property.

Proposed Project

The proposed onsite project work consists of removal most of the forest and constructing 21 single-family detached residences, road and other necessary infrastructure improvements. The subject property is zoned R90 and the applicant is utilizing the cluster method of development.

Environmental Buffers

Runoff from the property flows into Cabin John Creek, a Use I stream. There are approximately 0.5 acres of environmental buffers on the subject property. No encroachments are proposed into the environmental buffers.

Forest Conservation

The property is subject to the forest conservation law and must comply with section 22A-12(f) of the Montgomery County code for sites developed under the cluster of other optional method of development in one-family residential zones. In this site plan, the applicant must meet the forest conservation threshold on-site. The applicant is proposing to remove 4.2 of the 6.5 acres of forest that currently exists. The remaining 2.3 acres of forest will be placed into a forest conservation easement. The amount of forest retained in this site plan exceeds the forest conservation threshold and therefore the application complies with section 22A-12(f) of the Montgomery County code. The applicant has a 0.52-acre forest-planting requirement, which will be met through a combination of onsite landscaping and forest planting. The applicant is proposing to replant the unforested portions of the WSSC right-of-way, however, WSSC is becoming increasingly reluctant in allowing reforestation of unforested right-of-ways. If WSSC prohibits the planting on the right-of-way, the applicant will have to find an off-site area to satisfy the unmet forest conservation plan requirements.

The site plan indicates a home located at the rear of lot 21. Environmental Planning requests the house on lot 21 be moved to the front of the building area. Locating a house at this location will negatively impact a 33-inch dbh southern red oak. The base of the tree is located off the subject property. By locating, the house at the front of the buildable area there would less critical root damage and the house would be more compatible with the adjoining homes which area shown near the front of the buildable areas.

Stormwater Management

The stormwater management concept consists of on-site quantity control via a detention pond and water quality control via a surface sand filter, stormwater credits, and dry wells. The Department of Permitting Services approved the stormwater concept on December 12, 2002.

Noise Mitigation

Motor vehicle noise from traffic along Seven Locks Road will have a negative impact on the future homeowners. In order to mitigate the traffic impact noise, the applicant is proposing to construct a noise wall parallel to Seven Locks Road, but at the rear of the individual lots. There is a 50-foot forest immediately adjacent to Seven Locks Road so the noise wall will not line the roadway and the forest will minimize it's visibility to traffic. The proposed noise wall will be constructed of T-111 ornamental plywood. This is a relatively inexpensive and easily maintainable material preferred by Environmental Planning for noise mitigation fences.