

Action

MEMORANDUM

March 27, 2009

TO: County Council

FROM: Jeffrey L. Zyontz,  Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: Action: Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Wild Acres (Grosvenor Estate) 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, Resource #30/15

The attached resolution approves the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Wild Acres (Grosvenor Estate) 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, Resource #30/15 as revised by the Council on March 24, 2009. The Council took a straw vote to:

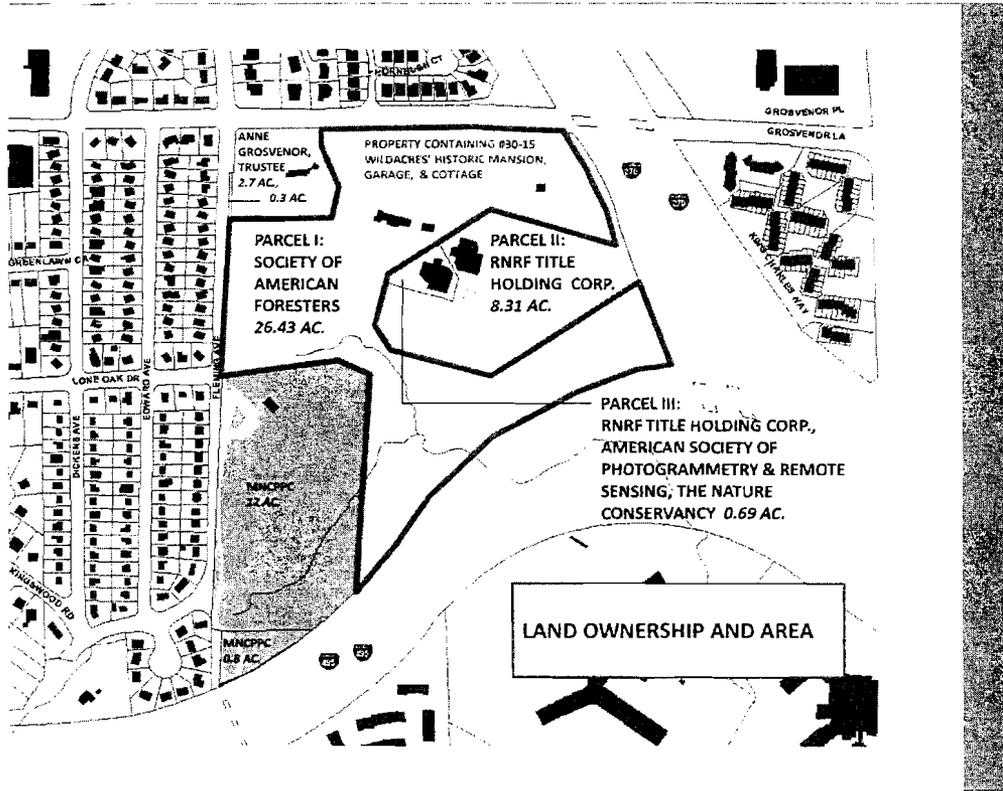
- 1) designate the manor house, the garage, and the caretaker's cottage as historic buildings;
- 2) add the criteria for historic designation relevant to Wild Acres; and
- 3) amend the area of the environmental setting.

The attached resolution makes specific changes to the Amendment, consistent with the Council's straw vote and the general discussion that it was not intended to preclude appropriate new buildings or structures located in the environmental setting. The attached resolution was reviewed by Historic Preservation Staff.

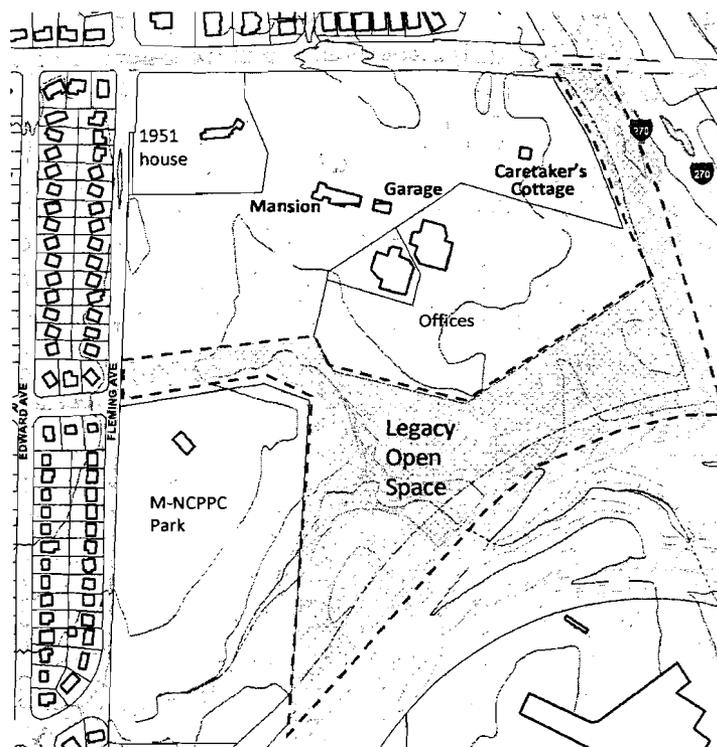
Remaining issues:

- 1) Omitted fact

The staff presentation to Council on March 24, 2009 omitted a fact that may be relevant to the Council's decision. The 34.7 acre site recognized by the Maryland Historic Trust as eligible for the National Register of Historic Sites includes 2 parcels, under different ownership, as indicated in the following map:



The Amendment would apply only to the 26.4 acre parcel owned by the Society of American Foresters. A significant area of their parcel (approximately 10 acres) was included by the Planning Board as a Legacy Open Space site.



The owners believe that the combination of the legacy designation and a large environmental setting imposes an undue regulatory burden on their property.

2) Caretaker's cottage

The Council's straw vote on March 24 would designate the caretaker's cottage as a historic building. When this issue was before the Planning Board, Planning Staff recommended text in the Amendment to allow the relocation of the cottage under certain circumstances. Planning Staff made this recommendation when there was a specific development proposal before them - a special exception application for a school. Planning Staff believes that the Historic Preservation Commission always has the authority to approve the relocation of a historic building, and that text in the Amendment to allow the relocation of a building is unnecessary in the absence of a specific development proposal.

The Council did not address this issue on March 24. If the Council wants to highlight the possibility of the relocation of the cottage, it should do so in the Amendment. Staff recommends including the follow addition to Council's resolution:

The caretaker's cottage may be relocated if appropriate, subject to the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission. The relocation must take into account proximity to its current location, orientation to the road and approach to the house, and the appropriate distance from new construction.

This addition, if approved, would be added to the last sentence of the new paragraph, after the fifth bullet on page 1.

This packet contains

© Number

Resolution to approve the Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Wild Acres

1 - 4

The Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Wild Acres as revised by the attached resolution

5 - 9

Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: March 31, 2009
Adopted: _____

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
SITTING AS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PORTION
OF THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL DISTRICT
WITHIN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: District Council

Subject: Approval of Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Wild Acres (Grosvenor Estate) 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, Resource #30/15

1. On September 10, 2008 the Montgomery County Planning Board transmitted the Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Wild Acres (Grosvenor Estate) 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, Resource #30/15 (hereafter referred to as the Amendment) to the Council.
2. The Amendment recommended the inclusion of the Wild Acres Estate (Resource #30/15 - mansion, garage, and caretaker's cottage) in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The Planning Board recommended a 5-acre environmental setting, as well as an area 10 feet from each side of the caretaker's cottage.
3. On November 12, 2008 the County Executive expressed support for this Amendment, but urged the Council to designate a 16.1-acre environmental setting as recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).
4. On January 13, 2009 the Council held a public hearing on the Amendment. The Master Plan was referred to the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee for review and recommendation.
5. On March 16, 2009 the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee held worksessions to review the issues raised in connection with the Amendment.
6. On March 24, 2009 the County Council reviewed the Amendment and the recommendations of the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee and agreed that the documentation of the building's history, the scholarship on the Country Estate period in the

County, and the passage of time makes the inclusion of Wild Acres in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in the public interest.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, sitting as the District Council for that portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following resolution:

The Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Wild Acres is approved with revisions. Council revisions to the Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Wild Acres are identified below. Deletions to the text of the Plan are indicated by [brackets], additions by underscoring.

Page 1, paragraph 1: This Amendment [considers the designation of] designates one resource to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. [If designated the] The resource [would] will be protected by the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

Page 1, third bullet: • The Tudor Revival style mansion house and coordinating garage, as well as the rustic Craftsman style of the caretaker's cottage possess distinct characteristics of these architectural styles. The three buildings were designed by Arthur Heaton, an accomplished local architect who was prolific in the early 20th century. [Heaton designed all three of the resources in this nomination.]

Page 1, fourth bullet: [• The resource possesses high artistic value for the siting of mansion, carriage house, and caretaker's cottage in a natural setting, and for the sweeping vistas to the north and south.]

Page 1, fifth bullet: • The resource is located on parcel P065 (Tax ID 0042430). The [recommended] environmental setting includes that mansion house, garage (carriage house) and caretaker's cottage. The setting boundary [around the mansion and garage is five acres. The setting around the caretaker's cottage extends ten feet from each side of the structure] is approximately 8.9 acres as indicated on the map on page 4. Significant to the setting are the vistas looking north and south from the main residence. The setting excludes the master planned right of way for Grosvenor Lane.

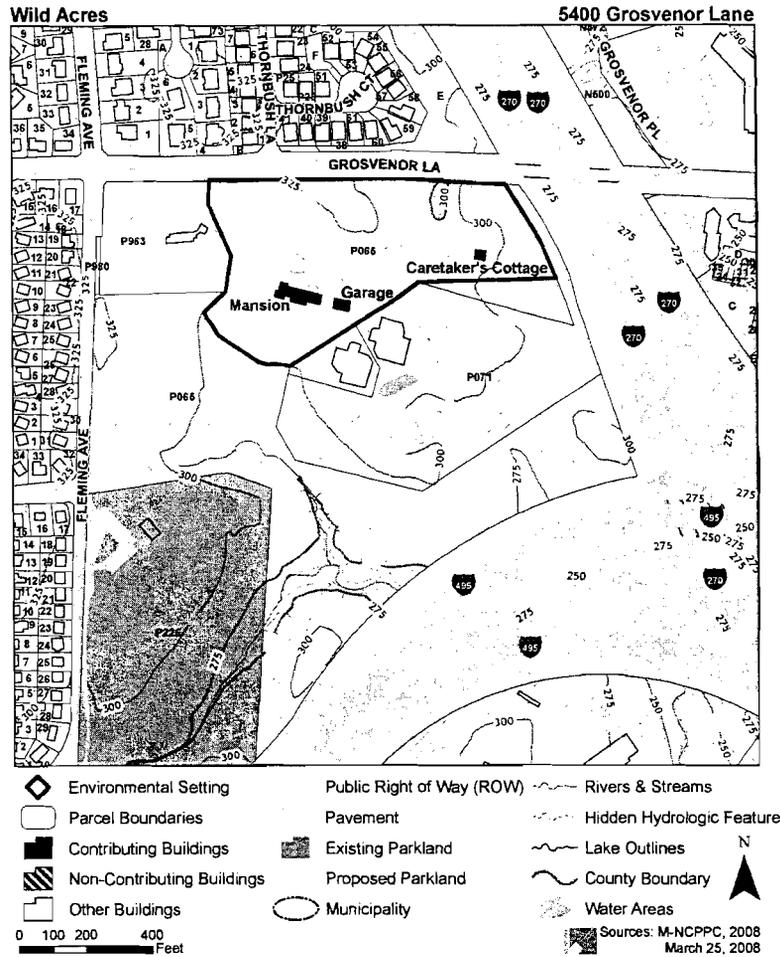
Page 1, after the 5th bullet, starting a new paragraph: The Historic Preservation Commission must not require a historic work permit for any land disturbance or building permits within the setting boundary that are required to complete the approved Renewable Natural Resources Foundation special exception on the property. The approval of historic area work permits by the Historic Preservation Commission for new buildings and structures in the environmental setting are allowed in a manner that is respectful of the historic buildings.

The following criteria apply to Wild Acres (the numbering reflects the criteria in Chapter 24A):

- 1a. It has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County for representing the country estates that once lined Rockville Pike in the early 20th century.
- 1c. It is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society because it was the home of Gilbert Grosvenor, Editor of the National Geographic Magazine and President of the National Geographic Society.
- 1d. It exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the County and its communities by representing a country estate.
- 2a. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction by representing the Tudor Revival Style mansion house and coordinating garage as well as the rustic craftsman style of the caretaker's cottage.

Page 3, caption under the second picture: Caretaker's [House] Cottage

Page 4: Replace the map of the environmental setting with the following map:



General

The text is to be revised, as necessary, to achieve clarity and consistency, to update factual information, and to convey the actions of the District Council. All identifying references pertain to the Planning Board Draft Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Wild Acres.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council

THE AMENDMENT

Resource #	Historic Name	Location
30/15	Wild Acres (Grosvenor Estate)	5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda

This Amendment designates one resource to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The resource will be protected by the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

- The Wild Acres estate was the home of Gilbert H. Grosvenor and Elsie Bell Grosvenor. Gilbert Grosvenor, Editor of the National Geographic Magazine and President of the National Geographic Society, was a photojournalism pioneer and influential in the expansion of the national park system.
- In 1912, the Grosvenors purchased a 104-acre parcel flanked by Rockville Pike on the east and the Rockville streetcar line on the west. Wild Acres is highly representative of the country estates that once lined Rockville Pike in the early 20th century.
- The Tudor Revival style mansion house and coordinating garage, as well as the rustic Craftsman style of the caretaker's cottage possess distinct characteristics of these architectural styles. The three buildings were designed by Arthur Heaton, an accomplished local architect who was prolific in the early 20th century.
- The resource is located on parcel P065 (Tax ID 0042430). The environmental setting includes that mansion house, garage (carriage house) and caretaker's cottage. The setting boundary is approximately 8.9 acres as indicated on the map on page 4. Significant to the setting are the vistas looking north and south from the main residence. The setting excludes the master planned right of way for Grosvenor Lane.

The Historic Preservation Commission must not require a historic work permit for any land disturbance or building permits within the setting boundary that are required to complete the approved Renewable Natural Resources Foundation special exception on the property. The approval of historic area work permits by the Historic Preservation Commission for new buildings and structures in the environmental setting are allowed in a manner that is respectful of the historic buildings.

The following criteria apply to Wild Acres (the numbering reflects the criteria in Chapter 24A):

- 1a. It has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County for representing the country estates that once lined Rockville Pike in the early 20th century.

- 1c. It is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society because it was the home of Gilbert Grosvenor, Editor of the National Geographic Magazine and President of the National Geographic Society.
- 1d. It exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the County and its communities by representing a country estate.
- 2a. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction by representing the Tudor Revival Style mansion house and coordinating garage as well as the rustic craftsman style of the caretaker's cottage.



Wild Acres, north facade



Wild Acres, south facade



Garage



Caretaker's Cottage

Wild Acres #30/15, 5400 Grosvenor Lane
 Environmental Setting

