

10310
—31/6 Bl.4 Lot #19 (Connecticut Ave.)—

PRELIM. CONSULT. Kensington H. D.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Applicant never showed up!

Address: Lot #19, Block 4
(10300 block Connecticut Avenue) Meeting Date: 10/11/95

Resource: Kensington Historic District Review: PRELIMINARY
CONSULTATION

Case Number: Not Applicable Tax Credit: No

Public Notice: 9/27/95 Report Date: 10/4/95

Applicant: Mr. David Saah Staff: Robin D. Ziek

PROPOSAL: New construction - single family home **RECOMMEND:** Modify
application to proceed to
HAWP

BACKGROUND

The Kensington Historic District was established in July, 1986 when the County Council adopted an amendment to the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation. As stated in the Amendment (p.2),

"The district is architecturally significant as a collection of late 19th and early 20th century houses exhibiting a variety of architectural styles popular during the Victorian period including Queen Anne, Shingle, Eastlake and Colonial Revival. The houses share a uniformity of scale, set backs and construction materials that contribute to the cohesiveness of the district's streetscapes. This uniformity, coupled with the dominant design inherent in Warner's original plan of subdivision, conveys a strong sense of both time and place, that of a Victorian garden suburb."

Kensington has maintained its distinctive character through the subsequent years of development. The community has been evaluated in the 1992 study Vision of Kensington: A Long-Range Preservation Plan prepared by Traceries and PMA Associates. Staff will focus on the recommendations within that planning report, as well as the character of Kensington in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project.

Setting: The subject property is accessed from Connecticut Avenue, a portion of the historic district which has been dramatically altered by the street widening which changed Connecticut from a small scale thoroughfare to a 7 lane highway. This part of the historic district has been turned over to vehicular traffic, while the rest of the Kensington Historic District has maintained a pedestrian-friendly environment. Many existing homes were torn down to allow for the widening of Connecticut Avenue, and many of the remaining buildings sit very close to the road, or don't relate to Connecticut at all.

One reason why houses on the west side of Connecticut no longer relate to houses on the east side of the street is that the grade of Connecticut was raised above the previous grade

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and now many of the remaining buildings sit below the level of the street. In addition, the remaining buildings were not built as edge buildings on Connecticut, but face side streets. Now that the intervening buildings are gone, they show a side which had not been previously seen from Connecticut. This is illustrated with a residence on the east side of Connecticut which faces Warner Street, where its outbuildings are visible from the subject property even though the buildings are not oriented to Connecticut.

Other construction in the vicinity includes a public parking garage at the corner of Connecticut and Warner. Across the street from this, on the east side of Connecticut, is a large office building which is set back from the street, leaving an expanse of grass along Connecticut Avenue.

In general, those whose property is on Connecticut do their best to screen out the street views and noise as much as possible. The subject property had been enclosed with a 6' high wooden board fence, although this has been taken down to allow a view into the property from Connecticut Avenue. The board fence continues to Warner Street, where it protects a Victorian frame structure (820 Warner Street) from the street noise. *See p 24*

(3820)
The Site: Lot 19, Block 4 is a wedge-shaped lot of approximately 8,000 sf, although this needs to be verified. The narrow portion of the wedge is on Connecticut Avenue and the property widens out to the rear. The adjacent lots to the north (#14, 15) are the rear yard for 820 Warner Street. The lot to the south of the subject property is also a wedge-shaped lot, and the HPC reviewed proposals here which provided for the rehabilitation of this 20th c. residence for use as a commercial day care center. (10308 Connecticut Avenue)

Construction on Lot 19 is constrained by the shape of the lot. In addition, the HPC will consider the presence of two mature trees which appear to be on the lot, although the applicant says there are no trees on this lot. The two trees in question are a southern magnolia, and a red maple. Both trees appear to be towards the middle-rear of the lot.

Proposed Project Description: The applicant is the contract purchaser of the lot, subject to the outcome of the Preliminary Consultation with the HPC. He proposes to build a single family residence in a "colonial" style. He has provided sketches for the HPC to consider.

Setback: 28' setback from the street.

Lot coverage: Appears to be about 25%.
The lot size is approximately 8,000 sf. I have requested a more specific figure from the applicant. The proposed house footprint is 1786 sf + the carport is 240 sf, for a total of 2026 sf. Assuming that the lot size is in the range of 8,000 sf, the lot coverage would be 25%. [If the actual lot size is as much as 12,000 sf, the lot coverage would be 16.8%.]

Materials: Brick on the front facade, and vinyl siding on the other three sides. This is a typical treatment for a "colonial" in a new development.

Massing & Design: The proposal exhibits 18th and 19th century elements which are inconsistent, and out of scale with each other. Triple bay windows on the first floor and double windows at the second floor, with inoperable shutters on the second floor level only, a large central curving window at the second floor which is out of scale, a central gable dormer which illustrates elements of Gothic and Greek Revival styles, and the hip roof above which is typical of Colonial architecture. Only the front facade has been presented, but the proposal includes a carport at the rear/side of the house.

STAFF DISCUSSION

To address the major question first, a proposal to build a single-family residence at Block 4, Lot #19 on Connecticut Avenue is consistent with the recommendations of the Kensington planning document prepared by Traceries. In that study, this part of the Kensington Historic District is considered "Peripheral Residential Area". The report says that construction of a single family residence on one lot is consistent with the surrounding development.

If it is consistent for the HPC to agree that a house may be built at this location, the question still remains whether the particular house which is proposed is consistent with the Kensington Historic District and the planning recommendations. The planning report also recommends a minimum setback of 35' and a maximum lot coverage of 15%. The proposed project does not meet either of these criteria.

The HPC has worked closely with people on new development to assure that the new building will fit in with the historic district and with its surrounding neighbors. For example, at 3929 Prospect Street, which is located in the immediate neighborhood of the subject property, the HPC approved the construction of a new Colonial Revival house. This new building met all of the HPC criteria. The lot was very large (14,879 sf) with a road frontage of 122.5'. The house measures 40' x 30', the design is coherent, and the materials are consistent with the historic materials in the district (painted wood siding and trim, and wood windows). The house meets the setbacks of its neighbors, and the massing is consistent as well. Lot coverage is approximately 9.75%.

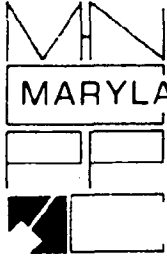
Another example in the immediate neighborhood is the new house at 3913 Baltimore Street. In that case, the lot was smaller (9,523 sf) with only 50' road frontage and the approved new house measures 28' x 36' (with an additional porch measuring approximately 10' x 10'). In this case, lot coverage is approximately 11.6%.

Finally, the HPC is currently working with a contractor on the construction of a new house at 3806 Washington Street. That lot also is one of the more regular shaped rectangular lots with 50' road frontage. The lot has approximately 10,000 sf, and the new house measures 24' x 48' (1152 sf). The lot coverage is 11.5%.

In all cases, building setbacks, materials, massing and design have all been of serious concern to the Commission, and they have worked through project revisions with the applicants to achieve a proposal which will have the least impact on the historic district.

This particular proposal is not consistent with previous HPC decisions in terms of size, massing, materials, location and compatibility of design. The house as proposed by Mr. Saah would have lot coverage which is much greater than the general lot coverage in Kensington by far. Where the Commission has been approving lot coverage of under 12%, Mr. Saah's proposal is around 25%. Where the Commission encourages use of natural materials, Mr. Saah is proposing a mix of brick and vinyl cladding. Where the recommended setback is 35', Mr. Saah's proposal is less than that. Finally, the proposed design is incoherent and is inconsistent with the architecture in the Kensington Historic District.

Staff recognizes that this is an odd-shaped lot and this is a consideration for any future development. However, there is flexibility in the design process so that new construction will fit into the Kensington Historic District. Since the proposed structure is only a sketch at the moment, Staff feels that issues of size, location, materials, and design coherence can all be addressed, if the HPC directs staff to work with the applicant.



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring Maryland 20910-3760

FAX TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Design, Zoning, & Preservation Division
(301)495-4570 (Telephone)

(301)495-1307 (Fax Number)

TO: TONY SEGRETI FAX NUMBER: 365-0590

FROM: CLARE LISE CAVICCHI PHONE NUMBER: _____

DATE: 6-18-96

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS TRANSMITTAL SHEET: 5

NOTE:

FOLLOWING IS STAFF REPORT RE: LOT 19, BLOCK 4

PER YOUR REQUEST

Another issue which may be worth discussing is the consideration of the damage to Kensington which was done with the widening of Connecticut Avenue, and the question of whether new development can move in a direction of mending this rift. To some degree, this is the "gateway" to Kensington, yet the impression people get of Kensington is mixed with a jumble of heavily screened historic structures, new construction of varying scale, and high fences as they ride up and down Connecticut. In fact, one has to leave Connecticut Avenue to get a feel for the late 19th/early 20th cent suburb.

Staff feels that new construction at these edge properties on Connecticut can begin the process of reclaiming Connecticut Avenue as a suburban road rather than a suburban highway, and help to tie the Town of Kensington back together again across this dividing line. This can be achieved, in part, by establishing a presence on the road that relates to the Historic District. This will begin to let people know that Connecticut Avenue is part of the Kensington community. This opportunity will come up more now since these edge lots have become sufficiently valuable with fewer "in-town" lots being available for development.

A similar instance which has some relevance here is the recent work which the City of Takoma Park has undertaken to reclaim Piney Branch Road where it passes through the Takoma Park Historic District. The work which has just been completed involved narrowing down that road to two lanes with planting areas and parking spaces in front of the residences that front the road. At both ends of this portion of Piney Branch, the road widens to four lanes to facilitate the movement of traffic. But through this residential portion of Takoma Park, the traffic has to slow down to reflect the safety and convenience of the residents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission allow this project to proceed to HAWP if the applicant is willing to redesign the proposal, modifying the project in size, massing, materials, location and design. The HPC may wish to recommend a second Preliminary Consultation.

ATT.
ROBIN

DEE-LAND BUILDERS, INC.

5904 Carol Sea Ave.
Rockville, MD 20851
(301) 294-0869 (or) (301) 340-9267

David H. Sach
Architect (Seah)

Custom Homes
Commercial
and Rehab Work

SUBJECT PROPERTY

LOT: 19

BL.: 4

CONN. Ave - Kensington
R. & B. DETRICKS SQ. N.

SUGGESTED SINGLE F. HOUSE
COLONIAL - 2 FLOORS + BAST.
FRONT BRICK -
3 SIDES VINYL SIDING

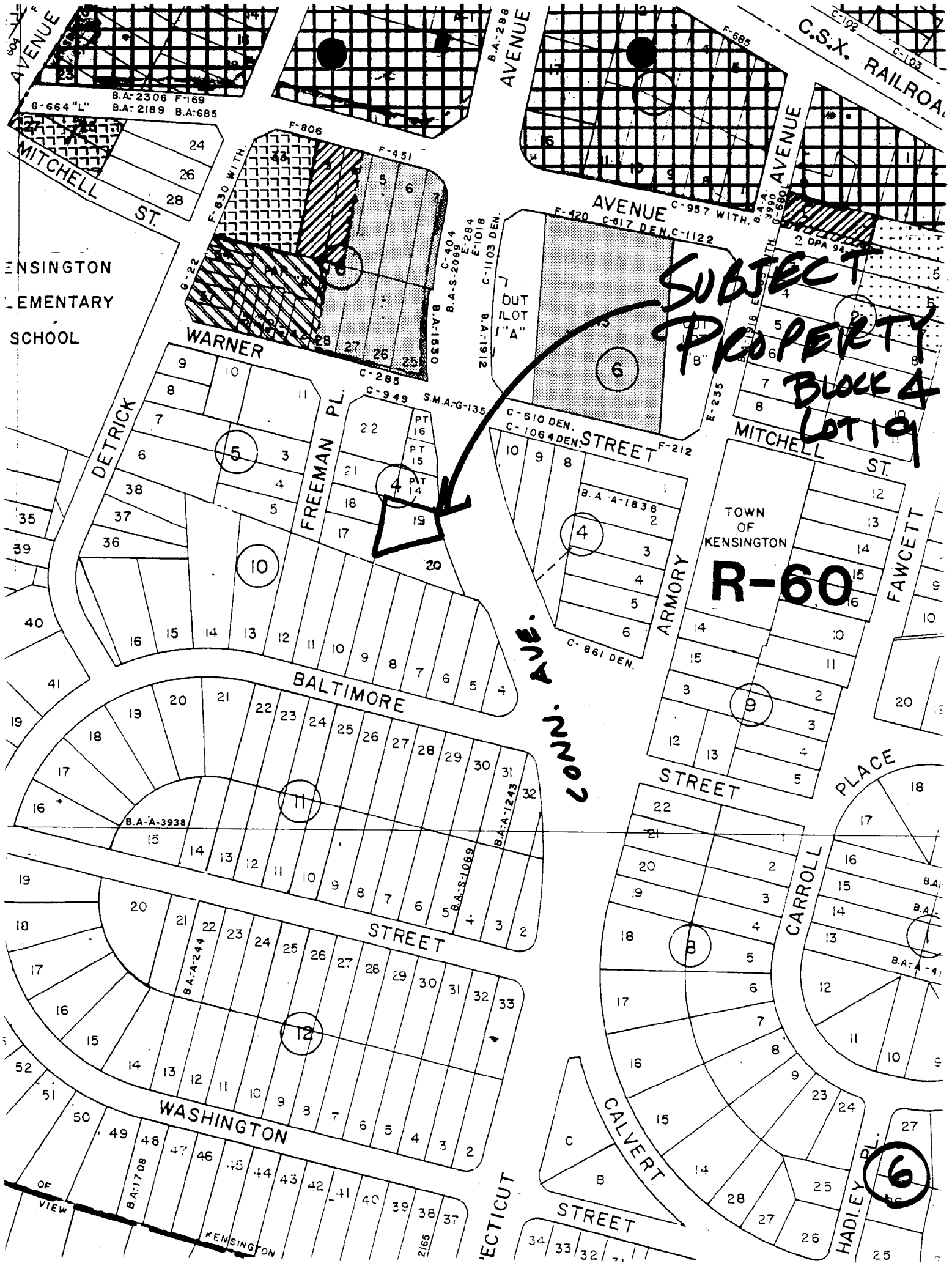
1ST FLOOR Car port - LIVING - DIN.
Family - Kitchen - LIBRARY
Guest room - Powder + Bath

2ND FLOOR 4-BED ROOMS 3 BATHS

BAST. Unfinished now



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**SUBJECT
PROPERTY
BLOCK A
LOT 19**

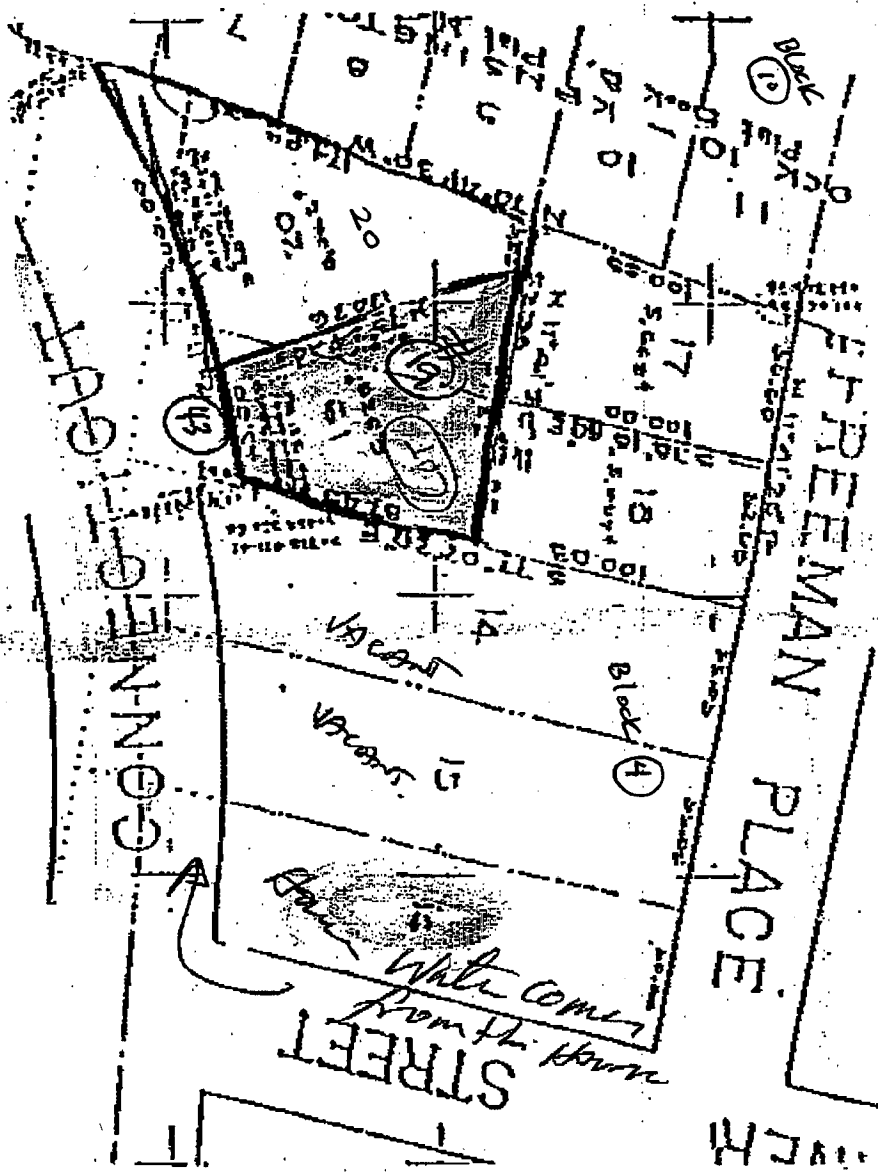
R-60

ENSINGTON
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

TOWN
OF
KENSINGTON

6

LOT # 19 - NO TREES AT ALL



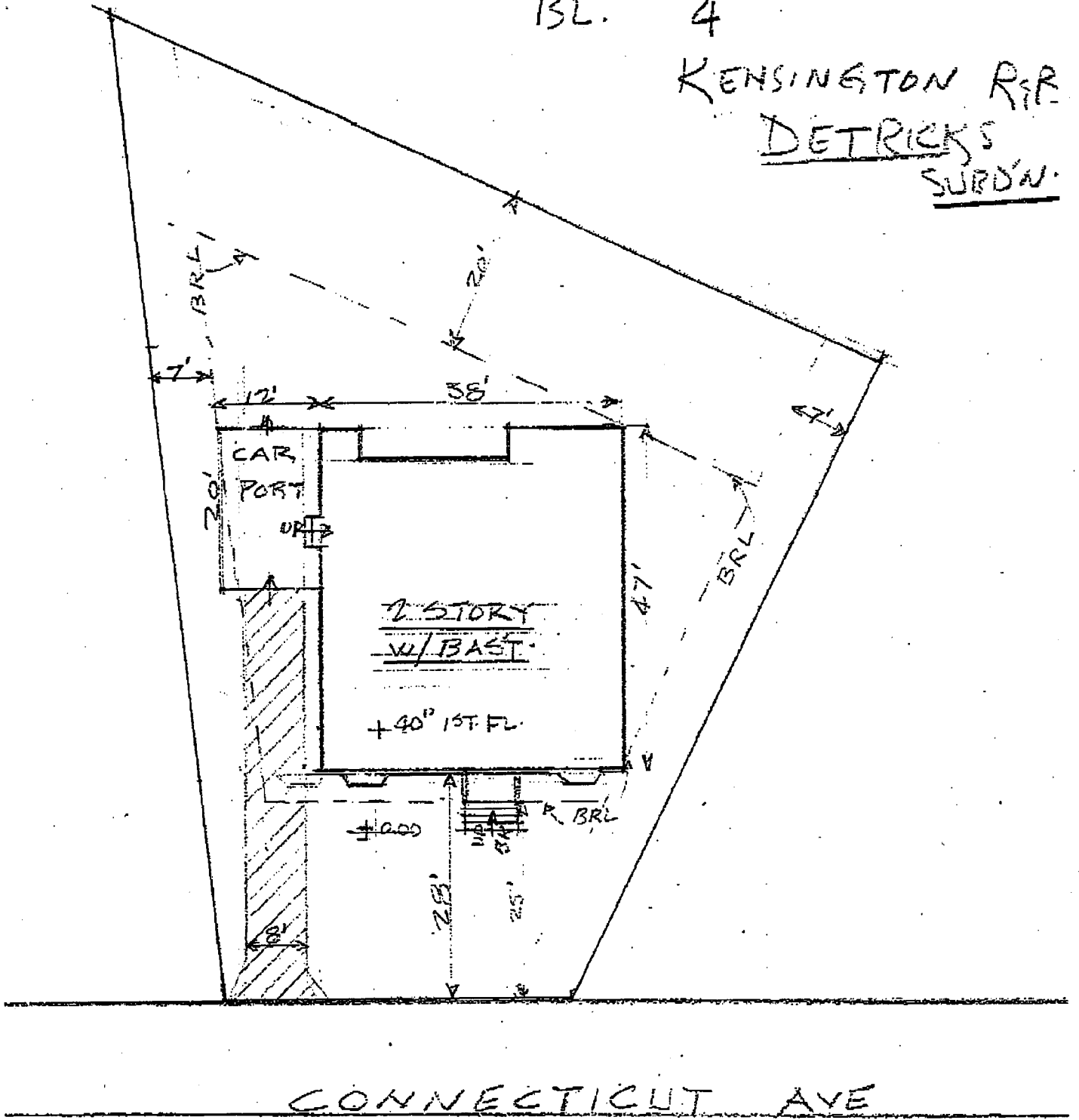
Tax Map HP 343

Block #4
Lot #19

7

LOT 19
BL. 4

KENSINGTON R₁R
DETRICKS
SUBD_W.



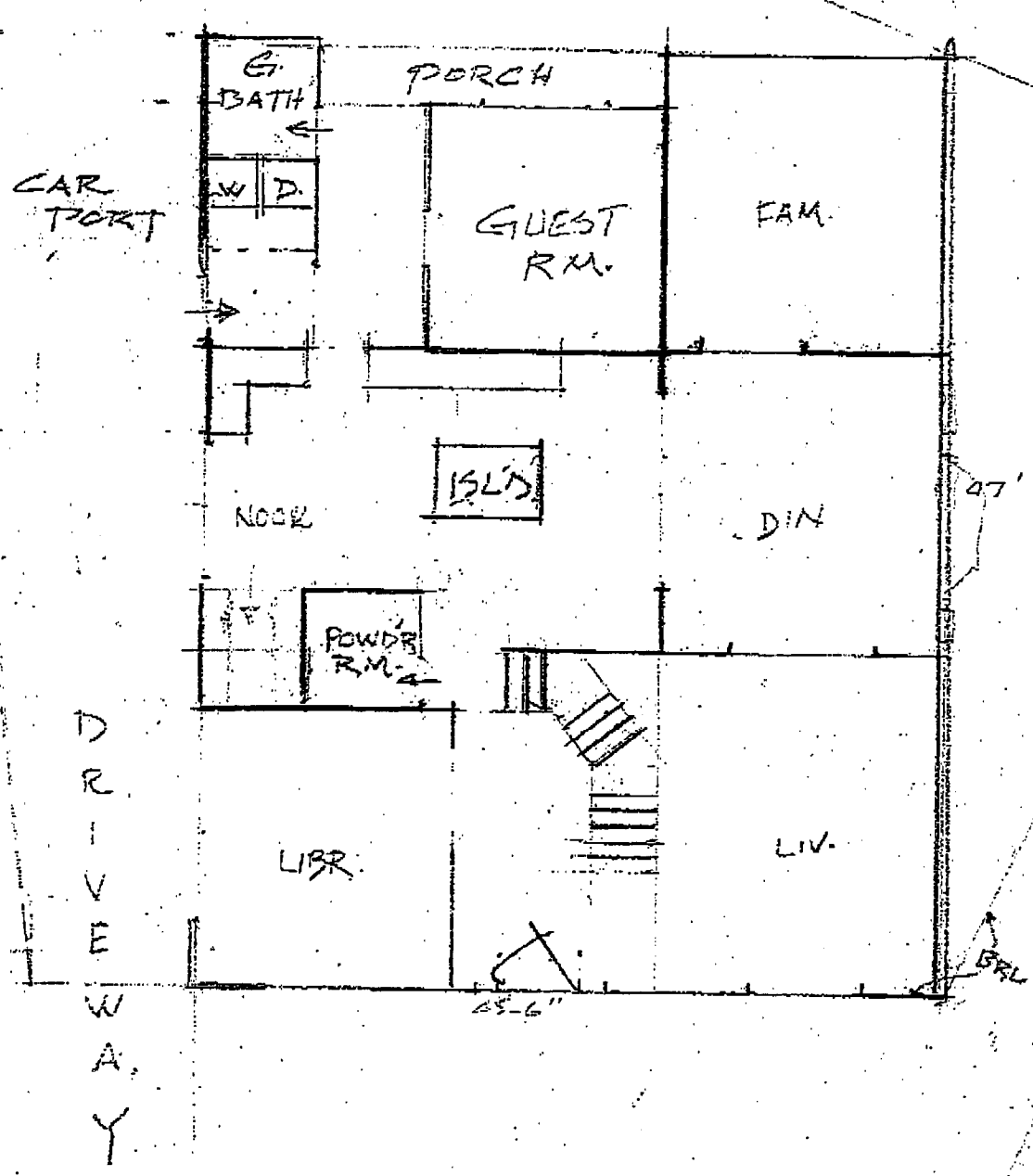
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SIDE ELEV. WILL FOLLOW THIS



FRONT ELEVATION 1/8" SC.

BR/L



10

DEE-LAND BUILDERS, INC.

5904 Coral Sea Ave.
Rockville, MD 20851
(301) 294-0869 (or) (301) 340-9267

David H. Saah
Architect

Custom Homes
Commercial
and Rehab Work

Dear Robin,

This is the site plan for
the lot in Kensington.

The Neighbour is ~~kind~~ in the Shoe
Day Care.

1038 Connecticut Ave
Kensington, MD 20898

Thanks Roxie

10308 Conn. Ave.

11

Dear ROBIN,

Neighbor - lot 16 -
ON CORNER IS AGREEABLE
TO SHARE COSTS OF WATER
EXTENTION TO LOTS 14, 15
\$ 19 - SO HE IS NOT
OBJECTING FOR DEV'T.

LOT IN QUESTION
19
HAS NO TREES AT
ALL.

THANKS FOR
YOUR HELP - AND
I AM NOW STUDYING
OTHER PROBLEMS RELATING
TO ENTRANCE TO THIS
HOUSE - ELEVATIONS -
~~WATER~~ STORM WATER
PROBLEMS etc.

THANKS
Sincerely
10/1/95 *[Signature]*

David Saah - 294-0869
Cono. Ave. Lot 19 Block 2.
next to 10300

Kensington - empty lot - to build a new house -

2 story w/ basement Colonial - rectangular
lot is odd shaped -

Q: Has anybody submitted before on this lot?
- No

→ Appraised new Colonial Construction at

~~3729~~

3929

show slides

~~39317~~

reference this as good
example - wood siding -
magnificent

820 Warner St - Victorian frame house

look it's side yard to Cona. Ave.

14" D. A =

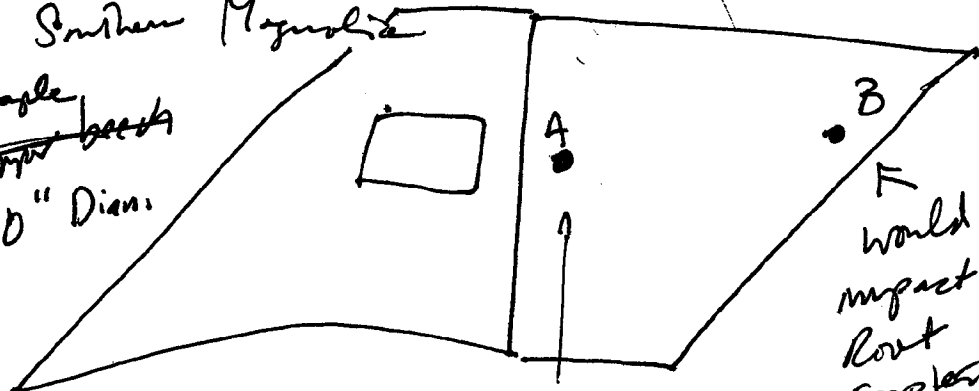
Large Southern Magnolia

Red maple

Young ~~maple~~ beech

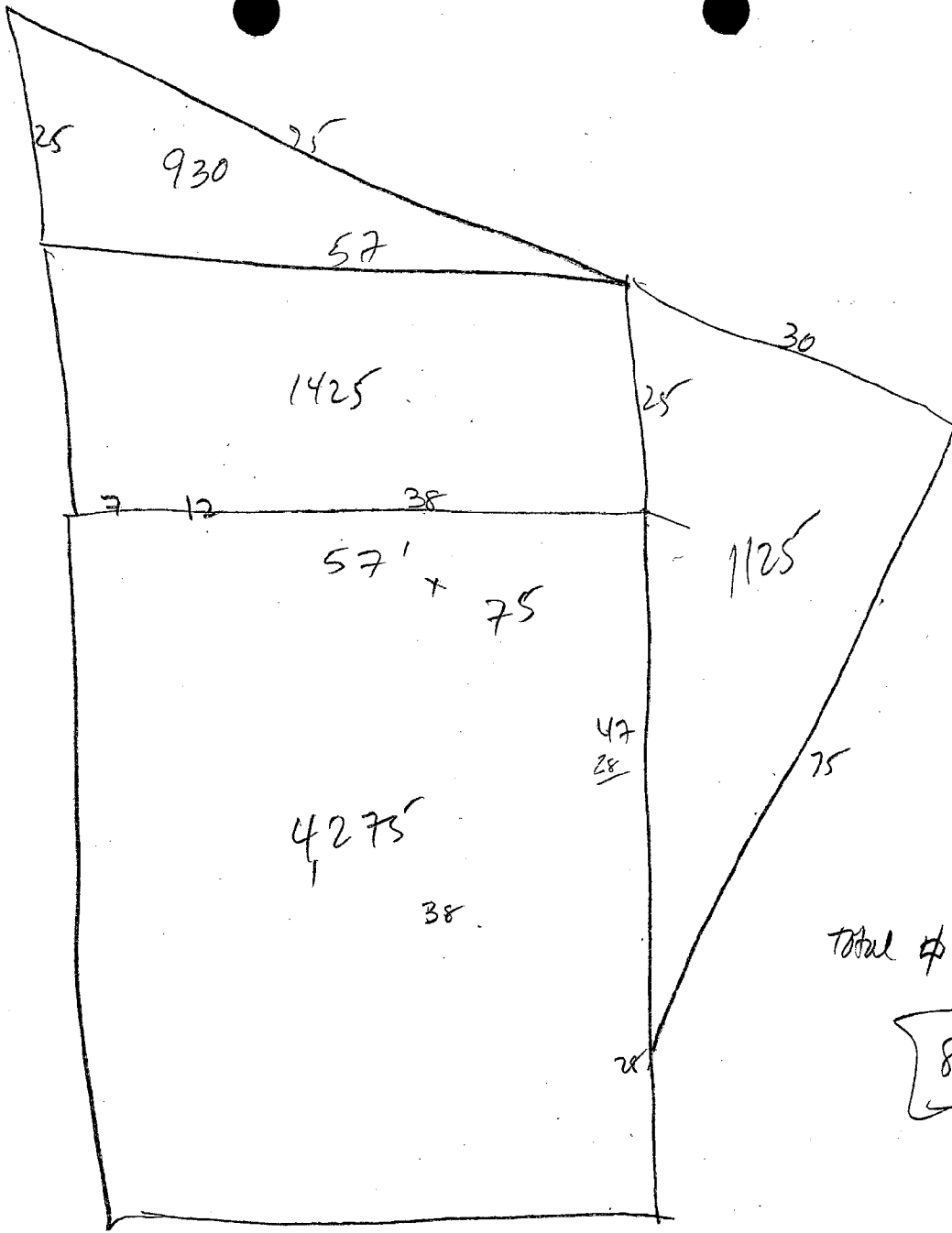
20" Diam.

B. -



in line
of driveway

F
would
impact
Root
system



Total $\phi = 7755$

8,000 / 7