

2917 McDONALD HOUSE

~~1995 TAMP~~ SUBDIV PROPOSALS
1990-93

file - Potomac Manor
8-88071

West Montgomery calls special French School meeting

by Phil Coupe
Staff Writer
8/25/93
POTOMAC GAZETTE

The West Montgomery County Citizens Association has one thing to say about the French International School's plan to move from Bethesda to Potomac: "NO!"

With a showdown looming next month over the proposed transplant, West Montgomery has called a special meeting 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 9 to bring members up to speed and reaffirm its no-compromise stance on the issue.

The meeting, to be held at the Potomac Elementary School on

River Road, will also be an opportunity for the group to plot its opposition for Board of Appeals hearings scheduled Sept. 29 and 30 in Rockville.

Meanwhile, the River Road Citizens Coalition, West Montgomery's ally in the fight against the school, is offering to send speakers to any Potomac neighborhood interested in learning what kind of impact opponents believe the school will have.

"We'll send out all the invitations and bring in our own speakers for free to anyone who asks," said Peggy Lawson, a member of the coalition.

The coalition has invitation-only meetings scheduled Aug. 30 in River Oaks, Sept. 2 in Piney Glen, Sept. 7 on Piney Meetinghouse Road and two others on Tara Road and in Potomac Towne yet to be scheduled. The coalition has set up a hotline telephone number, 983-9005.

The two groups, claiming a combined membership of 1,200, believe the proposed 1,500-student school will create mile-long traffic snarls along River Road and bottle up the village, as well as destroy the residential character of surrounding neighborhoods.

Last year the French School

bought a 25-acre tract between Sandy Landing and Chapel Roads, roughly a mile north of the village, with plans to consolidate its campuses in Potomac. The land is zoned for one home per two acres.

The French School is now spread between two campuses, one at 3200 Woodbine St., Chevy Chase and another at 9600 Forest Rd., Bethesda.

"The French International School has committed millions of dollars in the past year to purchase the proposed River Road site, and has spent additional huge sums on lawyers, consultants and engineers to make a

sophisticated appeal to the County for a special exception," wrote Nels Ackerson, retiring president of West Montgomery, in a letter notifying members of the meeting.

Yet, Ackerson wrote, "the French School has still not even considered WMCCA's conclusion that the proposed school would clog eastbound morning rush hour traffic on River Road, would restrict access to River Road from Piney Meetinghouse, Norton Lane and other neighborhood roads . . . and would inundate other neighborhood roads with spillover traffic seeking an (Please see MEETING, A-18)

Meeting

(Continued from page A-1) alternative route around Potomac Village."

The French School disagrees, saying the traffic impact will be lessened by the school opening

at 8:45 a.m., after peak rush hour, and by the use of 24 buses to transport a majority of its students.

While traffic remains the groups' primary concern, both allege the school will have other negative impacts on Potomac such as damaging wetlands, pol-

luting nearby wells and ruining the residential character of surrounding neighborhoods.

The coalition has hired Environmental Resources Inc. to study wetlands on the school's property. The coalition believes the figures on the size of the wetlands may not be accurate.

While the French School claims its construction plan will leave 70 percent of its land as open space, Environmental Resources contends the school's five main buildings, driveways and running track will actually leave only 60 percent of the land as open space. Eighty-to-90 per-

cent open space is the norm for residential neighborhoods.

"The French School is proposing to put 60 students per acre on that land, which equals 120 students on a section of land that is zoned for one family," said Harry Lawson, a coalition member.

→ In Battle of Potomac, the French Surrender

Posh Area Defeats Plans to Build an Elite International School

WASH. POST 7/1/94

By Louis Aguilar
Washington Post Staff Writer

It was a grass-roots battle—fought Potomac-style. After donating \$70,000 to the cause, about 1,500 residents of this village in Montgomery County have overpowered plans to build a French International School on 25 acres along River Road.

The issue pitted an elite private school against one of the nation's wealthiest communities in a contest that typified Montgomery County's tradition of well-connected grass-roots activism.

When La Fondation du Lycee Francais International de Washington bought land at Chapel Road and Fox Hunt Lane for \$3.6 million two years ago, Potomac residents responded quickly.

They lobbied friends in the State Department in hopes of getting them to designate the school a foreign mission subject to restrictions that could invalidate La Fondation's land purchase. They hired a lawyer, a transportation specialist, an environmental

consultant and a land-use planner to opine that the school would threaten Potomac's way of life.

But mostly they dug into their own deep pockets. Some residents supported the campaign with thousands of dollars. ABC "Nightline" anchor Ted Koppel opposed the school because it would have dumped too much traffic onto River Road, which he uses to commute to work, said organizer Bob Beckman, a lawyer.

Koppel was out of town yesterday and could not be reached for comment.

The school finally surrendered Tuesday night, when the 15-member board of the D.C.-based private foundation dropped its plan to build the school on its property. "The neighbors clearly don't want us there," said a disappointed board president, Herman J. Cohen, an assistant secretary of state in the Bush administration. "We are going to explore other options" to build in Montgomery.

The school was to enroll 850 elementary, junior

See POTOMAC, B8, Col. 1

48

Potomac-Style Activism Defeats Plans For an Elite International French School

POTOMAC, From B1

high and high school students in five buildings with a soccer field and running track.

The foundation saw the Potomac site as a chance to consolidate its two crowded facilities in Bethesda, where tuition ranges from \$4,500 to \$6,000.

Most of the students are from France, Belgium and French-speaking African countries. One-third are children of foreign diplomats, Cohen said.

But school officials underestimated Potomac's capacity for activism. "It was an outrage," Beckman said. "It would have a negative impact on the village."

As soon as the proposal emerged, residents hired consultants and an attorney to fight the school's efforts to win an exception to the area's residential zoning. The transportation specialist, for example, videotaped traffic to make congestion projections. The Montgomery Planning Board denied the exception, and the school was appealing to the county Board of Appeals when it backed away from the fight.

In preparation for the Board of Appeals fight, Potomac residents called State Department contacts in hopes of using the Foreign Mission Act to outlaw the school. Be-

cause some foundation board members are affiliated with the French government, the agency acted illegally when it bought the land privately, Potomac residents contended. But the foundation pinned its hopes on a sympathetic State Department ruling, according to Harry Lerch, an attorney for the French school.

"We thought that would be a definitive answer that could give us the advantage in the Board of Appeals case," Lerch said. "But I have learned in the last few days the State Department is not going to act on this. That leaves us in a very gray area."

A State Department spokeswoman would say only that the Potomac group had been in touch with the agency.

Early in the dispute, bold red signs proclaiming "Stop the French School" were plastered throughout the area. They were torn down almost immediately.

"In the beginning, it did create something of an anti-foreign climate, but that subsided early," said neighbor Stanley Karnow, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author.

There was smugness on both sides, he said. "I remember attending an embassy dinner, and the French cultural attache said they wanted to build the school in Potomac to give the area some high culture. In French I answered, 'We already have it,'" Karnow said.

In Potomac



by Cissy Finley

Retirement center plan is opposed by petition

Carey and Jack Miller's Trespassers W Farm on River Road is the most recent location under consideration by the First Phoenix Limited Partnership to build a retirement center in the Potomac area, following the defeat of their plan to do so on the Normandy Farm acreage.

"Yes, Mr. (Walter) Bucher did offer us a contract," Carey Miller said. She continued, "We have made no commitment to anyone and have no intentions of doing so without further investigation or without a great deal of input as to how we think a retirement community should be set up to please the longtime Potomac residents who no longer wish to maintain a large piece of property."

The contract offered to the Millers and the report that Bucher's plans called for a retirement center to include 250 condominiums with a pharmacy, infirmary, recreational facilities, and a restaurant on 10 of the Millers' 20 acres, with the remaining 10 used as a buffer, prompted Bill Ragan to write a "Dear Neighbor" letter.

In this letter to residents of Potomac Farm Estates (the area on the north side of River Road adjacent to Potomac Elementary School), Ragan urged his neighbors to indicate opposition to the plan on an enclosed petition he included with his letter. He was also concerned with proposals

properties. "This would take six lots and divide them into 12," he wrote.

"I am sorry Bill Ragan feels the necessity to circulate a petition regarding what he thinks he may have heard we might do with our farm," Carey Miller said. "Why didn't he ask us?"

The Miller farm is adjacent to the 60-acre Granger property on River Road, receiving acreage for TDR's (transferred development rights). According to Ragan's letter, 41 units could possibly be built on the Granger property, making it "almost impossible for residents to get out of Norton and Chapel roads." He concludes the area "cannot support the (sic) type of density."

Jack Miller added, "We also lease the 60-acre Granger property. This makes us the largest farmers in downtown Potomac!"

"Instead of people always being against something, why not try to be positive for a change. I wish the West Montgomery County Citizens Association would come up with a positive solution to the problem. Anyway, until one is found, I intend to keep on raising horses on our 20 acres," Carey Miller advised.

East meets west

With fortitude, foresight and a flourish, Bev Libbey of the Village Travel of Potomac and McShea Travel of Rock-

group to the Super Bowl.

"The week before Christmas I started blocking seats and calling hotels," Bev confessed. She just knew in her bones the Redskins were going to do it. "It has been wild around here all week," she added.

Potomac-types headed west last week were numerous. Among those on the \$529 each, nonstop, package deal flight out of Dulles, were the Don Vannoys and the M.H. Vannoys, Barbara and "Mitch" Mitchell, Dr. Barton-Kroff and his son Brian, Gale Nussbaum, Carole Wilson, Kirk Horndeck, Gus Ladas with five of his family and Bev and Joe Libbey with her sons J.P. and Nick Antonelli.

Getting there under their own steam were Carolyn and Bud Gosnell, sons Greg and Gary and daughter Gerrin and her husband John McGowan. Carolyn made a six-foot-long sign prior to departure. "This has been worse than trying to get a rocket off at Cape Canaveral," Carolyn quipped.

Betty and Stretch Harting went, as did Betty Killay and her son Rob Milam, Jenny and Bill Manders, Bill Hilton, Jr., and his son Brent, Russell Rankin and Brant Baker.

According to Brant's mother Cozy Baker, her son will meet her in Palm Springs for some golf following the game. Cozy flew over to P.S. to see



AFFAIR OF THE HEART, the annual Washington heart luncheon, will be held Feb. 10 in the Washington Hilton ballroom. The chairman of the benefit, Mrs. Robert T. Foley (seated right) and vice chairman, Mrs. James McS. Wimsatt (seated left) are pictured with committee members (from left, standing) Mrs. Daniel J. Callahan, III, Mrs. Michael M..., Mrs. Thomas Stone, and Mrs. Charles Hellmuth of Potomac. Tickets for the event are \$25 each. For further information, call 652-7570 or 656-6192. —Photo by Glogan

Beyond Life," a living memorial to her son Randall, who was killed by a drunk driver.

This was her second half-hour talk show on the West Coast. She also addressed the Potomac Women's Republican Club last week and has

done numerous other promotions."

"Love Beyond Life" is "designed to help those who have lost loved ones," and may be ordered (\$8) through Beechcliff Books, suite 605, 100 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, Md. 21403.

Anniversary

It's hard to believe, but Norwood school will celebrate its 30th anniversary this year. Already plans are under way for a celebration dinner to

(See IN POTOMAC, page B-11)

AFTER INVENTORY
CADDET SALE

STATEMENT OF HARRY W. LERCH
ON BEHALF OF THE FRENCH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
REGARDING SITE 29/7 MCDONALD HOUSE
10600 RIVER ROAD, POTOMAC

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen. For the record, I am Harry W. Lerch of the Bethesda law firm of Lerch, Early & Brewer. I am accompanied this evening by Mr. Sandy Howe of the architectural firm of Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott of Boston. We are representing the French International School.

The French School is the contract purchaser of the twenty acres on which the McDonald House is located. In addition, it is the owner of the adjacent five acre parcel, known as the Ryan farm. The school plans to relocate its campus to this site in the next few years.

We are pleased to advise you that we have reviewed your research materials, and have met with Gwen Marcus as well as several neighbors and community leaders. We agree that the site is appropriate for master plan designation, and that the McDonald house itself meets several of the criteria.

We are not far enough along in our planning of a constructive reuse of the house to be able to tell you anything more than we expect the renovation to be expensive. It has suffered from neglect in many ways. As our planning proceeds, we expect to work closely with you and your staff. The original portion of the house, that which is visible from River Road, will

certainly be given the greatest concern and attention in our planning.

We believe that the barn itself, as an independent structure, is of questionable merit, but we also agree that it is appropriate to include within the historic setting so that it will be reviewed at the time of any future historic area work permit application.

Regarding the historic setting recommended by staff, we submit that one amendment would be appropriate. This would be on the west, or right side of the property as you face the house from River Road. A three rail split rail fence runs back from River Road on this side and clearly defines the curtilage of the original home. The pasture land to the west of this fence was included as part of Lot 42 when the Potomac Manors subdivision was created in 1990, but in fact, forms no part of the McDonald House curtilage. The rear (southerly) lot line of Lot 42, as well as the left side (easterly) lot line pretty well enclose the curtilage even though in places they extend a bit beyond the fences and the barn. In fact, the southerly and easterly lot lines of Lot 42 include several large trees which lie just outside the fences. As we intend to preserve these trees, we are happy to see them inside the proposed historic setting.

Shepley Bulfinch is now in the process of developing a plan for the future campus. In their planning, the architects are

respecting the house, the large trees surrounding it, and the historic setting as defined above. Traffic and safety issues are, of course, important aspects of their planning in addition to historic preservation issues. We believe that safety and traffic circulation issues are likely to require that a driveway will cross a portion of this area (as it has done for many years), but we expect that it will be designed cooperatively with your staff in a manner which is sensitive to the setting.

29/7 McDonald House
currently for sale 5-20-92

Owner: Vicki Davis
301/528-2413 South Charles Realty
25 S Charles St
Baltimore MD 21201

Tenant: Audrey Gue
+Realtor Optimum Properties
983-3100

Former owner 52092

Crowell + Baker
770-3360

Crowell says house has ghost
(mid-30s female) who he's
seen, smelled perfume.
She's friendly (!)

CLC

Clare -

6/29²⁸

Represents Contract
purchasers of the
McDonald House. Please
Send notice of 7/22
HPC meeting (as well
as notice to owners). JKM

DIRECT DIAL (301) 657-0161

HARRY W. LERCH

ATTORNEY AT LAW

LAW OFFICES
LERCH, EARLY, ROSEMAN & BREWER
CHARTERED

10th FLOOR
3 BETHESDA METRO CENTER
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814-5367
(301) 986-1300
FAX (301) 986-0332

Community 14: French School

9-9-93

Environmental setting

Drive ^{entrance} moved 50 ft east to edge of setting.

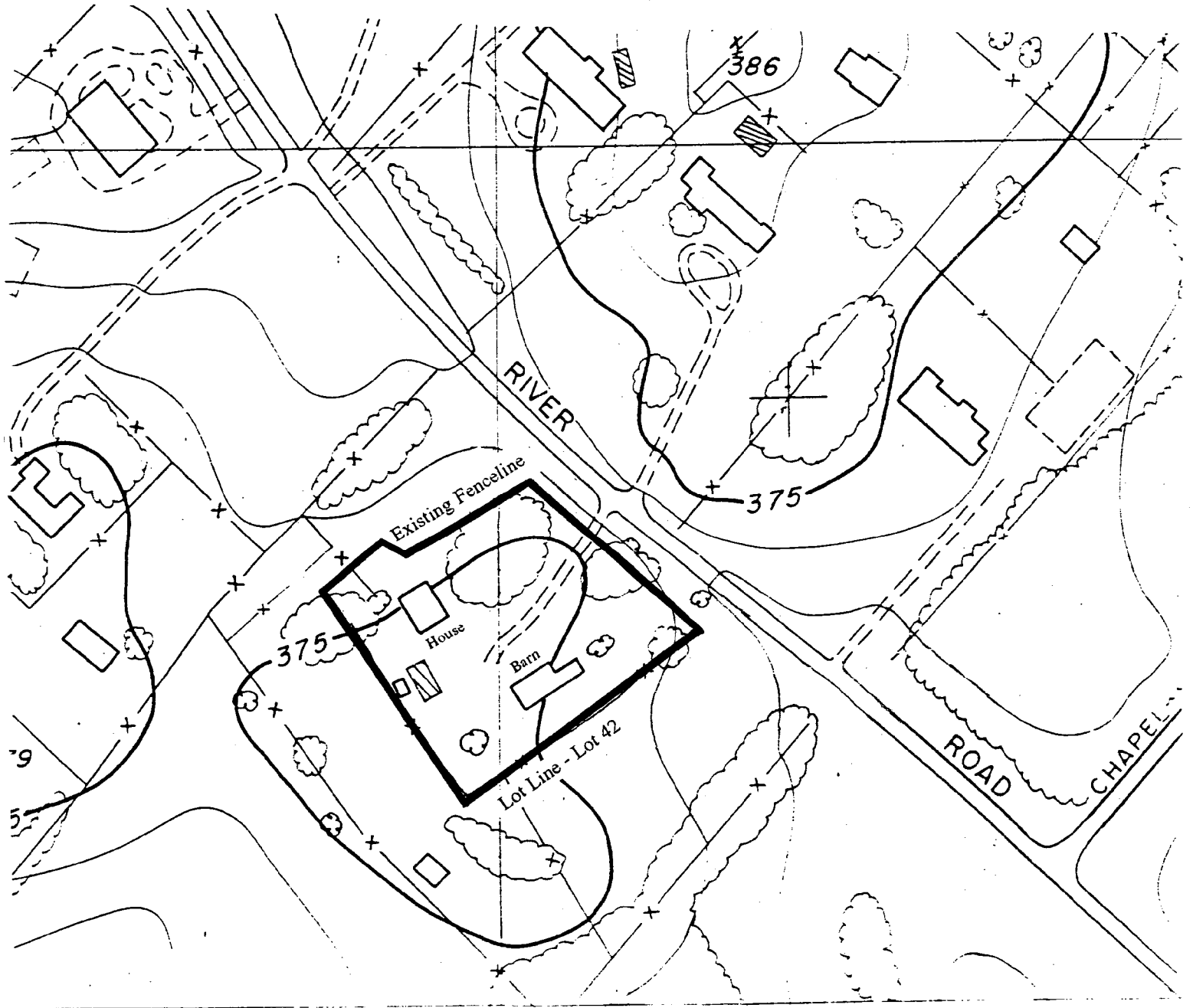
Driveway loops around perimeter of setting.

suggest narrowing road.

house to be reused as headmaster's quarters.

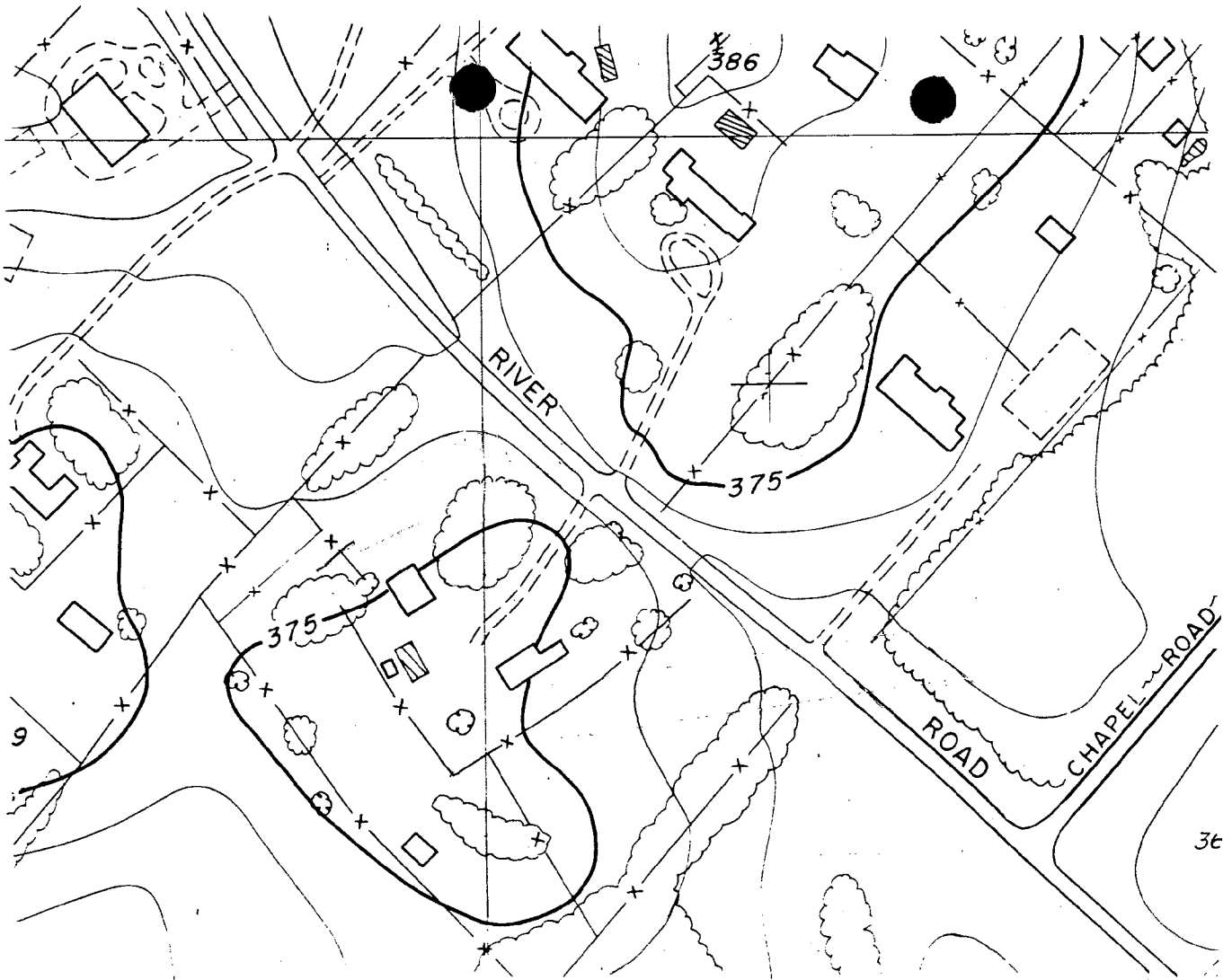
suggest reuse for stable.

Figure 2



#29/7 McDonald House, 10600 River Road
Proposed Environmental Setting (approx. 2 acres)





OWNER'S DEDICATION

We, the undersigned, 10600 RIVER ROAD LIMITED PARTNERSHIP by Crowell and Baker Construction Co., Inc., General Partner by Arden Baker, President and William Crowell, Secretary, owners of the property shown and described hereon, hereby adopt this plan of subdivision, dedicate the streets to public use, establish a 10-foot wide public utilities easement shown as 10' P.U.E. and recorded in Liber 3834 of Folio 457, establish an easement as shown for the construction, reconstruction, operation and maintenance of storm drains and establish slope easements 20 feet wide along all streets as required by Montgomery County Ordinance #4-115. Slope easements granted hereon shall be terminated after all required public improvements abutting said easements have been lawfully completed and have accepted for maintenance by Montgomery County, Maryland. We hereby grant to the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, their successors, agents and assigns easements as shown hereon for the construction, reconstruction, operation and maintenance of water mains, sanitary sewers and appurtenances.

There are no suits of action, leases, liens or trusts on the property included in this plan of subdivision, except a certain note and deed of trust and the parties in interest have hereon indicated their assent to this plan.

Date: Oct. 23, 1989

10600 RIVER ROAD LIMITED PARTNERSHIP by CROWELL AND BAKER, GENERAL PARTNER

Attest: *William Crowell* ARDEN BAKER, PRESIDENT
WILLIAM CROWELL, SECRETARY

WE HEREBY ASSENT TO THIS PLAN OF SUBDIVISION.

John J. Daily AMERICAN SECURITY BANK
WITNESS
John J. Daily
WITNESS
Fred J. Riley JUNIUS S. MORGAN TRUSTEE
FRED J. RILEY, TRUSTEE
Junius S. Morgan JUNIUS S. MORGAN TRUSTEE

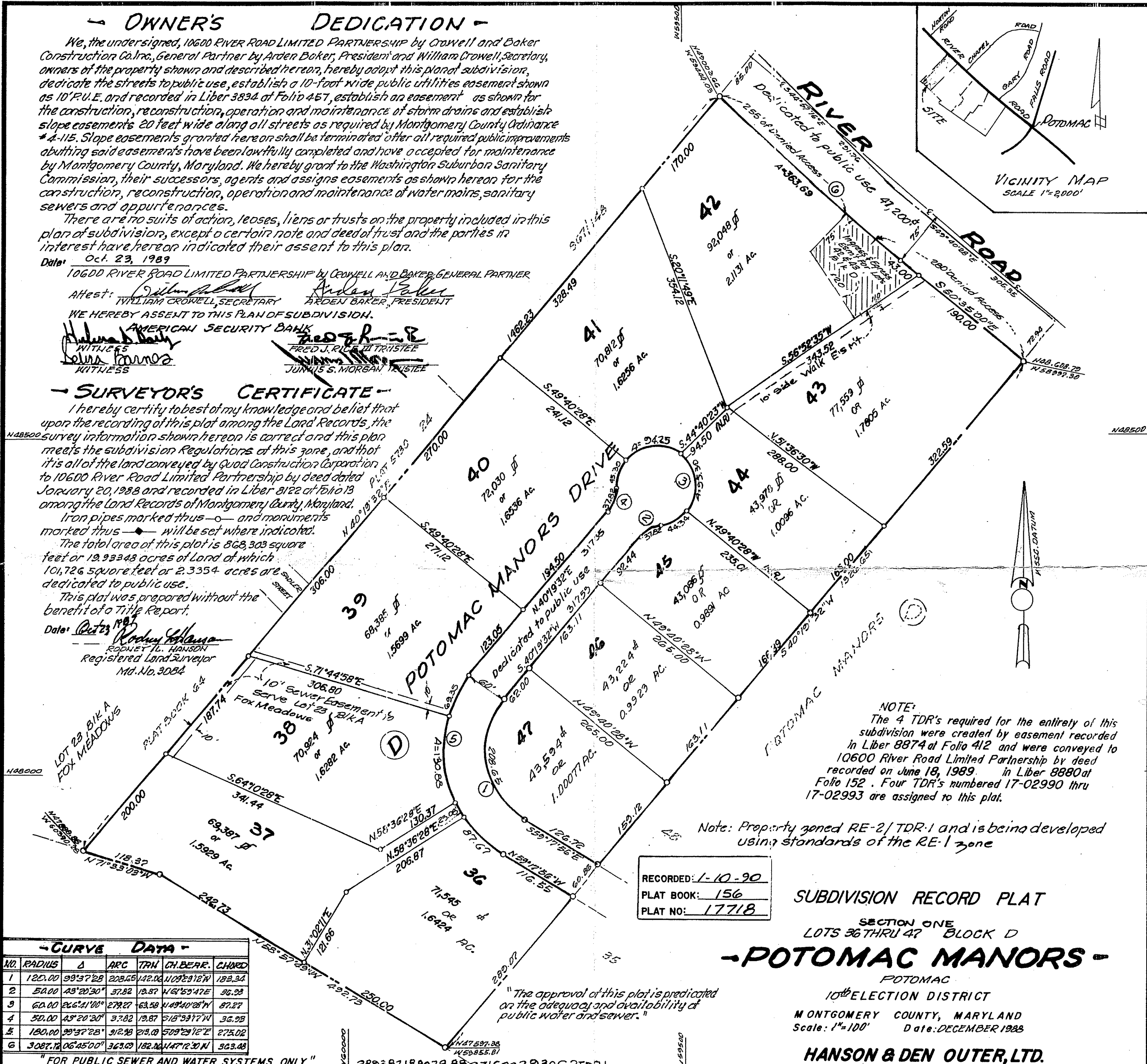
SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify to best of my knowledge and belief that upon the recording of this plat among the Land Records, the survey information shown hereon is correct and this plan meets the subdivision Regulations of this zone, and that it is all of the land conveyed by Quod Construction Corporation to 10600 River Road Limited Partnership by deed dated January 20, 1988 and recorded in Liber 8122 of Folio 13 among the Land Records of Montgomery County, Maryland. Iron pipes marked thus \circ and monuments marked thus \bullet will be set where indicated.

The total area of this plot is 868,303 square feet or 19.93348 acres of land of which 101,726 square feet or 2.3354 acres are dedicated to public use.

This plat was prepared without the benefit of a Title Report.

Date: Oct 23, 1989
Robert L. Hanson
ROBERT L. HANSON
Registered Land Surveyor
Md. No. 3084



NOTE:
The 4 TDR's required for the entirety of this subdivision were created by easement recorded in Liber 8874 at Folio 412 and were conveyed to 10600 River Road Limited Partnership by deed recorded on June 18, 1989 in Liber 8880 at Folio 152. Four TDR's numbered 17-02990 thru 17-02993 are assigned to this plat.

Note: Property zoned RE-2/TDR-1 and is being developed using standards of the RE-1 zone

RECORDED: 1-10-90
PLAT BOOK: 156
PLAT NO: 17718

SUBDIVISION RECORD PLAT
SECTION ONE
LOTS 36 THRU 47 BLOCK D
- POTOMAC MANORS -

POTOMAC
10th ELECTION DISTRICT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
Scale: 1"=100' Date: DECEMBER 1988

HANSON & DEN OUTER, LTD.
CIVIL ENGINEERS & LAND SURVEYORS
LAND PLANNING CONSULTANTS
172 ROLLINS AVE., ROCKVILLE, MD 20852
(301) 881-6770

- CURVE DATA -

NO.	RADIUS	Δ	ARC	TRN	CH. BEAR.	CHORD
1	120.00	99°37'28"	209.65	142.06	N 09°28'12"W	183.24
2	50.00	43°20'30"	37.82	19.87	N 61°53'47"E	36.29
3	60.00	26°21'00"	27.27	16.58	N 49°40'08"W	27.27
4	50.00	43°20'30"	37.82	19.87	S 18°39'17"W	36.29
5	180.00	99°37'28"	312.28	215.00	S 09°29'12"E	275.02
6	3087.18	06°45'00"	363.00	182.86	N 47°12'30"N	363.00

"FOR PUBLIC SEWER AND WATER SYSTEMS ONLY"
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
APPROVED: *November 9, 1989*
CHAIRMAN
SECRETARY - TREASURER

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
APPROVED: *December 8, 1989*
By: *Andrew Memman*
PIR DIRECTOR

Dept. of Environmental Protection
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
APPROVED: *December 15, 1989*
By: *David A. Hoban*
DIRECTOR

FILE NO. R.P. 917 JOB NO. 1682 C-1