



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: James Hunt, Chief, Development Review Division *JRH*
Anne Fothergill, Planning Supervisor, Urban Design Section *AF*
Development Review Division

FROM: Tom Burke, Planner IV, Urban Design Section *AF for TB*
Development Review Division

SUBJECT: **Item 9 - Detailed Site Plan DSP-22043 Melford Mansions**
Planning Board Agenda January 26, 2023 – Staff Revisions to Technical Report

After further analysis, staff recommends the following revised findings (added text underlined, deleted text [~~striketrough~~]) to the technical staff report for Detailed Site Plan DSP-22043 dated January 11, 2023:

Revised Finding 7e, page 19

- e. Section 27-274[(a)(6)] of the prior Zoning Ordinance establishes the required design guidelines for site and streetscape amenities for DSPs. The proposed plan meets all the site design guidelines by providing safe, efficient, and convenient vehicular and pedestrian circulation. Adequate lighting and landscaping to enhance the enjoyment of the site is also provided for the uses on the site. The subject DSP has been developed, in accordance with the relevant design guidelines, as referenced in Section 27-283 and contained in Section 27-274, as follows:

(1) General

- (A) The Plan should promote the purposes of the Conceptual Site Plan.

The proposed residential uses in this DSP are consistent with the design approved in CSP-06002-01 for a mixed-use community. The location of the Melford Mansions buildings were designated as a future multifamily residential site, in both the CSP and the PPS. In addition, the Melford Mansions development will allow for creation of a significant portion of the main plaza, located at the intersection of the future Lake Melford Avenue and Curie Drive, which was intended as a primary community element within the CSP.

(2) Parking, loading, and circulation.

(A) Surface parking lots should be located and designed to provide safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the site, while minimizing the visual impact of cars. Parking spaces should be located to provide convenient access to major destination points on the site. As a means of achieving these objectives, the following guidelines should be observed:

- (i) Parking lots should generally be provided to the rear or sides of structures;**
- (ii) Parking spaces should be located as near as possible to the uses they serve;**
- (iii) Parking aisles should be oriented to minimize the number of parking lanes crossed by pedestrians;**
- (iv) Large, uninterrupted expanses of pavement should be avoided or substantially mitigated by the location of green space and plant materials within the parking lot, in accordance with the Landscape Manual, particularly in parking areas serving townhouses; and**
- (v) Special areas for van pool, car pool, and visitor parking should be located with convenient pedestrian access to buildings.**

This DSP proposes 274 of its parking spaces to be located within multiple structured parking facilities, on the respective first floor of each proposed residential building. This will allow for residents to park within their residential building. Construction of the proposed structured parking, in this application, will reduce the provision of large uninterrupted expanses of pavement used for a traditional surface parking lot.

(B) Loading areas should be visually unobtrusive and located to minimize conflicts with vehicles or pedestrians. To fulfill this goal, the following guidelines should be observed:

(i) Loading docks should be oriented toward service roads and away from major streets or public view; and

(ii) Loading areas should be clearly marked and should be separated from parking areas to the extent possible.

The two exterior loading areas are shown and labeled on the DSP, and are in conformance with the above requirements.

(C) Vehicular and pedestrian circulation on a site should be safe, efficient, and convenient for both pedestrians and drivers. To fulfill this goal, the following guidelines should be observed:

(i) The location, number and design of driveway entrances to the site should minimize conflict with off-site traffic, should provide a safe transition into the parking lot, and should provide adequate acceleration and deceleration lanes, if necessary;

(ii) Entrance drives should provide adequate space for queuing;

(iii) Circulation patterns should be designed so that vehicular traffic may flow freely through the parking lot without encouraging higher speeds than can be safely accommodated;

(iv) Parking areas should be designed to discourage their use as through-access drives;

(v) Internal signs such as directional arrows, lane markings, and other roadway commands should be used to facilitate safe driving through the parking lot;

(vi) Drive-through establishments should be designed with adequate space for queuing lanes that do not conflict with circulation traffic patterns or pedestrian access;

(vii) Parcel pick-up areas should be coordinated with other on-site traffic flows;

(viii) Pedestrian access should be provided into the site and through parking lots to the major destinations on the site;

(ix) Pedestrian and vehicular circulation routes should generally be separated and clearly marked;

- (x) Crosswalks for pedestrians that span vehicular lanes should be identified by the use of signs, stripes on the pavement, change of paving material, or similar techniques; and
- (xi) Barrier-free pathways to accommodate the handicapped should be provided.

The proposed residential use, in this DSP, is consistent with the design approved in CSP-00002-01 for a mixed-use community. Construction of the east/west boulevard (Lake Melford Avenue) through the site will implement a vital circulation element identified in the CSP. The proposed driveway entrances for the community will be complementary to the planned road network, in this portion of the site. All crosswalks along pedestrian sidewalk routes will be prominently identified/marked, and all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curb cuts will be installed, to accommodate handicap access requirements.

(3) Lighting.

- (A) For uses permitting nighttime activities, adequate illumination should be provided. Light fixtures should enhance the site's design character. To fulfill this goal, the following guidelines should be observed:
 - (i) If the development is used at night, the luminosity, orientation, and location of exterior light fixtures should enhance user safety and minimize vehicular/pedestrian conflicts;
 - (ii) Lighting should be used to illuminate important on-site elements such as entrances, pedestrian pathways, public spaces, and property addresses. Significant natural or built features may also be illuminated if appropriate to the site;
 - (iii) The pattern of light pooling should be directed on-site;
 - (iv) Light fixtures fulfilling similar functions should provide a consistent quality of light;
 - (v) Light fixtures should be durable and compatible with the scale, architecture, and use of the site; and

- (vi) If a variety of lighting fixtures is needed to serve different purposes on a site, related fixtures should be selected. The design and layout of the fixtures should provide visual continuity throughout the site.**

The lighting proposed in this DSP meets all of the above requirements. All prominent on-site elements, such as the main entrance to each building and any structured parking garage, will be consistently lit throughout the appropriate portions of the day. The site will also incorporate full cut-off optics, to limit light spill-over into adjacent properties.

(4) Views.

- (A) Site design techniques should be used to preserve, create, or emphasize scenic views from public areas.**

This DSP proposes thoughtfully designed residential structures that preserve scenic views. Primarily, views to and from the Melford historic site (both the house and cemetery) will be maintained, as required by the design guidelines approved with the CSP. It should be noted that no grading is proposed within the environmental setting of the Melford House or Duckett Family Cemetery. Further, the architecture utilizes materials that are complementary and sympathetic to the adjacent Melford House. Specifically, the proposed building utilizes brick, other masonry materials, and architectural features that respond to the Federal-style architectural elements present within the Melford House. The location, shape, and height of the building allows the Melford House to remain the highest structure and a prominent building within the project.

(5) Green area.

- (A) On-site green area should be designed to complement other site activity areas and should be appropriate in size, shape, location, and design to fulfill its intended use. To fulfill this goal, the following guidelines should be observed:**

- (i) Green area should be easily accessible in order to maximize its utility and to simplify its maintenance;**
- (ii) Green area should link major site destinations such as buildings and parking areas;**
- (iii) Green area should be well-defined and appropriately scaled to meet its intended use;**

- (iv) Green area designed for the use and enjoyment of pedestrians should be visible and accessible, and the location of seating should be protected from excessive sun, shade, wind, and noise;
- (v) Green area should be designed to define space, provide screening and privacy, and serve as a focal point;
- (vi) Green area should incorporate significant on-site natural features and woodland conservation requirements that enhance the physical and visual character of the site; and
- (vii) Green area should generally be accented by elements such as landscaping, pools, fountains, street furniture, and decorative paving.

This DSP contains appropriate green areas for the proposed buildings. Specifically, multiple interior courtyards will be utilized to place appropriate amenities for the residents. Amenities will include a clubhouse building with an associated pool house, an outdoor pool, a courtyard with a seating area, grills, and a cabana-style lounge. In addition, the main plaza will include a gazebo, significant seating space with street furniture/benches, and decorative pavers.

(6) Site and streetscape amenities.

- (A) Site and streetscape amenities should contribute to an attractive, coordinated development and should enhance the use and enjoyment of the site. To fulfill this goal, the following guidelines should be observed:
 - (i) The design of light fixtures, benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks and other street furniture should be coordinated in order to enhance the visual unity of the site;
 - (ii) The design of amenities should take into consideration the color, pattern, texture, and scale of structures on the site, and when known, structures on adjacent sites, and pedestrian areas;
 - (iii) Amenities should be clearly visible and accessible, and should not obstruct pedestrian circulation;
 - (iv) Amenities should be functional and should be constructed of durable, low maintenance materials;

- (v) Amenities should be protected from vehicular intrusion with design elements that are integrated into the overall streetscape design, such as landscaping, curbs, and bollards;
- (vi) Amenities such as kiosks, planters, fountains, and public art should be used as focal points on a site; and
- (vii) Amenities should be included which accommodate the handicapped and should be appropriately scaled for user comfort.

This DSP contains details relating to the proposed streetscape amenities and hardscape. The proposed streetscape amenities will contribute to an attractive and coordinated design, to be shared throughout future sections of the Melford Town Center development.

(7) Grading.

(A) Grading should be performed to minimize disruption to existing topography and other natural and cultural resources on the site and on adjacent sites. To the extent practicable, grading should minimize environmental impacts. To fulfill this goal, the following guidelines should be observed:

- (i) Slopes and berms visible from streets and other public areas should appear as naturalistic forms. Slope ratios and the length of slopes should be varied if necessary to increase visual interest and relate manmade landforms to the shape of the natural terrain;
- (ii) Excessive grading of hilltops and slopes should be avoided where there are reasonable alternatives that will preserve a site's natural landforms;
- (iii) Grading and other methods should be considered to buffer incompatible land uses from each other;
- (iv) Where steep slopes cannot be avoided, plant materials of varying forms and densities should be arranged to soften the appearance of the slope; and
- (v) Drainage devices should be located and designed so as to minimize the view from public areas.

All grading will conform to regulations and the approved SWM plan. Excessive grading will be avoided through the proposed design and

all proposed drainage devices will be de designed to minimize views from public areas, to fullest extent practicable. The buildings are designed to absorb and respond to the falling grades present at the site. As such, the proposed buildings slightly step down, to be compatible with prevailing topographical conditions in this portion of Melford Town Center.

(8) Service areas.

(A) Service areas should be accessible, but unobtrusive. To fulfill this goal, the following guidelines should be observed:

- (i) Service areas should be located away from primary roads, when possible;**
- (ii) Service areas should be located conveniently to all buildings served;**
- (iii) Service areas should be effectively screened or enclosed with materials compatible with the primary structure; and**
- (iv) Multiple building developments should be designed to form service courtyards which are devoted to parking and loading uses and are not visible from public view.**

The service areas are located within each building proposed in this application. Access to loading areas will be via internal driveways and will be open to all residents. The buildings themselves will effectively screen views into the service/loading areas.

(9) Public spaces.

(A) A public space system should be provided to enhance a large-scale commercial, mixed-use, or multifamily development. To fulfill this goal, the following guidelines should be observed:

- (i) Buildings should be organized and designed to create public spaces such as plazas, squares, courtyards, pedestrian malls, or other defined spaces;**
- (ii) The scale, size, shape, and circulation patterns of the public spaces should be designed to accommodate various activities;**

- (iii) Public spaces should generally incorporate sitting areas, landscaping, access to the sun, and protection from the wind;**
- (iv) Public spaces should be readily accessible to potential users; and**
- (v) Pedestrian pathways should be provided to connect major uses and public spaces within the development and should be scaled for anticipated circulation.**

This DSP includes a significant portion of the main plaza, which will include a large gazebo, significant seating space with street furniture/benches, and decorative pavers. This public space will be easily accessible to residents and visitors of the entire Melford Town Center project. The plaza space will be framed by a pedestrian sidewalk network on both sides of the surrounding public street network.

(10) Architecture.

- (A) When architectural considerations are referenced for review, the Conceptual Site Plan should include a statement as to how the architecture of the buildings will provide a variety of building forms, with a unified, harmonious use of materials and styles.**
- (B) The guidelines shall only be used in keeping with the character and purpose of the proposed type of development and the specific zone in which it is to be located.**
- (C) These guidelines may be modified in accordance with Section 27-277.**

The multifamily buildings in this DSP conform to the relevant portions of the Design Guidelines approved with the CSP-06002-01. Specifically, Melford Mansions represents “Multi-Family Villas,” as described on page 41 of the approved Design Guidelines. In addition, the buildings meet all of the frontage requirements contemplated along the future east/west boulevard, as described on page 37 of the approved Design Guidelines. The proposed buildings include 5 stories along Lake Melford Avenue, exceeding the 3-story minimum height requirement on page 38 of the Design Guidelines. Further, all elevations of the proposed buildings are treated like a “front-façade” by use of high-quality brick and masonry materials (such as cementitious fiber board) on all sides of the buildings. The proposed elevations utilize a variety of colors, materials, and architectural façade projections, to create visual interest.

Revised Finding 8 (Discussion of CSP-06002-01 Condition 16), page 23

- 16. Prior to approval of any preliminary plan of subdivision or detailed site plan applications, the Historic Preservation Section shall certify that all quarterly reports have been received in a timely manner and that the Melford site is being properly maintained.**

In accordance with the Historic Preservation Section, the most recent quarterly report received was on ~~[July 9, 2019]~~ December 6, 2022, in accordance with this requirement. This condition will remain applicable to all future DSPs within CSP-06002-01.

Revised Finding 13a, pages 28 and 29

13. Prince George's County Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation

Ordinance: This property is subject to the provisions of the Prince George's County Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance (WCO) because it has previously approved tree conservation plans. This site was previously graded under TCP2-036-99. The TCP2 is for the gross tract area of the overall site, which is ~~[426.15]~~ 428.15 acres, which encompasses all parcels of the original TCP1.

The overall woodland conservation threshold for previously approved TCP2-036-99-18 is 43.26 acres, based on a 15 percent woodland conservation threshold requirement in the M-X-T Zone. The amount of woodland conservation required was 71.97 acres based on the previously approved clearing of 113.95 acres on-site. The TCP2 shows the overall requirements being met with 51.06 acres of on-site preservation, 7.71 acres of afforestation, 9.74 acres of specimen tree credit, 0.42 acre of fee-in-lieu, and 3.04 acres of off-site woodland conservation credits. The limits of disturbance for this DSP are in conformance with TCP2-036-99-18.

- a. TCP2-036-99-15 indicates that it covers a gross tract area of 428.15 acres, which is the portion of the Melford development (formerly University of Maryland Science and Tech Center) that is subject to the WCO and is significantly larger than the DSP under review.

The standard woodland conservation worksheet for the overall property indicates that the woodland conservation threshold for the site is 43.26 acres, based on the M-X-T zoning and a net tract area of 288.38 acres. The worksheet indicates that the site contains ~~[161.86]~~ 168.35 acres of upland woodlands and 85.73 acres of wooded floodplain. The revised TCP2 proposes clearing 113.95 acres of upland woodlands, and 0.23 acre of wooded floodplain. No off-site clearing is proposed. Two federal projects (the Institute for Defense Analysis and the Holocaust Museum Analysis) and previously dedicated rights-of-way have been subtracted from the gross tract area consistent with the previous TCP1 approval. Based upon the

clearing proposed, the applicant has calculated that the total woodland conservation requirement for the overall development is 71.97 acres.

TCP2-036-99-18 proposes to meet the requirement with [~~51.60~~] 51.06 acres of on-site preservation, including [~~12.11~~] 12.10 acres of woodland conservation located on property owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission; [~~11.91~~] 7.71 acres of on-site afforestation/reforestation; [~~9.24~~] 9.74 acres of specimen/historic tree credit; and 0.42 acre of fee-in-lieu. The plan also requires technical revisions to be in conformance with the applicable WCO, Environmental Planning Section policies, and the Environmental Technical Manual, as conditioned herein.

The TCP1 plan originally proposed specimen/historic tree credits within the environmental setting of the Melford historic site and cemetery. With the TCP2, the applicant provided a vegetation management plan for the environmental setting of the historic house which proposes the removal of historic trees on the site and requires approval of a variance from Subtitle 25.