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Thomas Building
DPA 08-2
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Preserve the Rural Entrance to Sandy Spring

I have lived in Ashton for 20 years and reside about 3 miles from the proposed Thomas Building. I am a member of the Sandy Spring-Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium Steering Committee, but these comments are my own, made as a citizen of the Sandy Spring-Ashton community.



Entryway to Sandy Spring

I wrote to the Planning Board on November 1 with four concerns about the Thomas Building:

- Building size is too large for the size of the lot
- Design must fit into the rural and historic area
- Inviting entrance into Sandy Spring must be preserved
- Increased traffic in the area must be managed

These points were developed prior to the availability of the Staff Report. After reading the Staff Report, I have more to say. I am appalled that the trees between the building and Norwood Road are going to be removed to make space for the storm water management system.

The Sandy Spring-Ashton Master Plan (page 67) says: “**Preserve trees as part of the rural character.** Where trees or hedgerows occur along roads or at property boundaries, a high priority should be given to maintain the wooded character and preserving existing trees.” Also, page 32 of the Master Plan, talking about recommendations for maintaining a small scale, says: “Create small parking areas that are well-landscaped, preserve trees,”

According to a memo from Environmental Planning, a preliminary forest conservation plan has been submitted as part of the Development Plan Amendment stating that: “...the applicant is proposing to remove all the forest... the applicant proposes to meet the planting requirements through an off-site forest mitigation bank.” Off-site planting does nothing to meet the Master Plan requirement for preserving trees.



Trees have already been cut down at the entryway to Ashton. Let’s not repeat that mistake by destroying the trees at an entryway to Sandy Spring. However, if the forest conservation plan is approved, I strongly encourage the Planning Board to designate the off-site planting site as the northeast corner of the intersection of Ednor Road and New Hampshire Avenue, where trees were clear cut in obvious conflict with requirements of the Master Plan (pages 43 thru 45).

(over)



The plan is too big for the site; if the plan were smaller, maybe the structures, including the storm water management system, would not encroach onto the trees and the trees could be saved. Retaining trees is a priority in the Master Plan aimed at maintaining the rural atmosphere.

I believe that the environment and rural entranceway should not be compromised by approving the current Development Plan Amendment. The Master Plan calls for retention of trees and it is now up to the Planning Board to uphold the Master Plan's requirements and recommendations.