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**Thomas Building**  
Case 120090230  
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## **Preserve the Rural Entrance to Sandy Spring: Save the Trees!**

*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 urge the Planning Board to reject the Preliminary Plan for the Thomas Building (also known as Goddard School), because it is just too massive for the rural village of Sandy Spring. The lot is at the entryway to Sandy Spring and is directly across the street from businesses in houses that are compatible with the Master Plan's vision.

Rural character is hard to define. However, there are areas in the Master Plan that are pertinent to this discussion:

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...”**

I am appalled and extremely disappointed that so many trees are going to be removed from this area. I know that the developer has been a leader in creating “green” buildings in this area; so why have they submitted a plan that requires such excessive tree removal? As decision makers with a responsibility for the future of Montgomery County's environment, I ask the Planning Board to not approve the Preliminary Plan as currently designed.

If the plan is approved, according to the staff report, 1.27 acres of reforestation are required. We have already seen the removal of nearly all trees at the south entryway to Ashton, the intersection of Ednor Road and New Hampshire Avenue (in direct conflict with the Master Plan, pages 43 through 45). If the final decision is to accept a reforestation plan, the Planning Board should require that reforestation be done at the Ednor/New Hampshire intersection. In any case, reforestation should be done in the Sandy Spring-Ashton community, not somewhere miles away.

If the building were not so large, it would be more compatible with the surrounding rural area and would not require excessive removal of existing trees.

I believe that the environment and rural entryway to Sandy Spring should not be compromised by approving the Preliminary Plan as submitted. The Master Plan calls for retention of trees and it is now up to the Planning Board to uphold the Master Plan and take action in support of the environment in Montgomery County.

