



WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT

DIANE GOSS FARRELL
First Selectman

November 4, 1999

Representative Town Meeting
Town of Westport
Westport, CT 06880

RE: PLANS FOR THE BARON'S SOUTH PROPERTY

Dear RTM Member:

Purpose: To recommend to the RTM a future course of action for the Baron's South property for the purpose of a sense of the meeting vote on November 9, 1999.

Background: In January 1999, the Town of Westport purchased the Baron's South property. It had been identified in the 1997 Town Plan of Conservation and Development as the Planning and Zoning Commissions' top recommendation for acquisition. The property had been on the market for several years and had been considered for purchase and tabled by the Board of Finance at two public hearings before final approval was obtained from the Board of Finance and RTM. A variety of potential uses, exceeding that which the property could handle, were debated as deliberations took place. They included the possibility of municipal use, an arrangement with the YMCA, as well as space for other non-municipal groups. Because no clear consensus existed for the property's use, the administration focused discussion on a central question: "should the Town of Westport control the future development of the largest parcel of land remaining in the downtown area?" At that time, it was made clear to all involved that the Town intended the purchase of the property for municipal purposes. This did not exclude open space but the clear possibility of municipal development also existed.

In addition, it was suggested by several Board of Finance and RTM members that an effort be made to recover some of the cost of purchase through the sale of a portion of the property. This suggestion was made in recognition of burgeoning taxes due to increased debt service and the anticipated impact of a property revaluation that is expected to shift greater burden on to the residential property owner.

RECEIVED

NOV - 3 1999

WESTPORT P. & COMM.

Once the property was purchased, the Baron's South Planning Committee originally formed in 1997 by then First Selectman Joe Arcudi was reactivated and reconstituted. After several public hearings numerous meetings and many months of research, the committee issued its findings to the administration in September. (See separate memo sent 9/21/99).

Recommendation: It is the administration's recommendation that a portion of the Baron's South property be sold to defray the purchase price. Specifically, the administration recommends preparation of three to four residential lots on the ridge of the property be created for sale. Sale of the lots would yield from \$1 - \$2.8 million. Access to these lots would be from existing curb cuts off of Compo Road South. These lots would be "estate size" (i.e. larger than the minimum allowable) and if the Planning and Zoning Commission chooses, could have restrictions limiting building height and size as a condition of sale. If possible, not-for-profit groups would be considered as purchasers. Several group-home organizations including Kids in Crisis, Project Return and Mohonk House have expressed an interest in the existing Tudor home on the southeastern portion of the property. One of these organizations could be suitable to the building/property. In addition, the Westport Historical Society would like to be considered for the "mansion" known as "Golden Shadows". It is important to note that sale of these properties would not be for "one dollar a year". A reasonable price would be negotiated that might include an easement for public use of the property. It would also be prudent to obtain a right of first refusal should the organization choose to sell at some future date. If for some reason these groups drop out, the property could of course be made available for general sale for residential development.

The white building directly on Compo Road South (the former chauffeurs' living quarters), will be retained for use by the Town of Westport Public Works Department.

Once a permanent entrance to the property has been established, rehabilitation and use of the residence on Imperial Avenue will need to be determined.

Discussion: The administration does not recommend the sale of the lower portion of the property to the YMCA. After much consideration, it does not seem prudent to break-up the property in the location desired by the Y. The topography of the land is such that to sell off the central portion requested by the Y would significantly limit the Town's options in the future.

Future Town of Westport municipal development opportunities would include but are not limited to: the relocation of the police station, the relocation of the Parks and Recreation maintenance facility (currently at Longshore), athletic fields, the brush/leaf transfer area and community gardens. If the present initiative to permanently locate the senior center at Staples High School proves unsuccessful, a permanent senior center may also be considered.

Many of these options are potential for the future. Given the current demand for capital dollars in support of school construction, it may be a significant period of time before some of these projects would come to fruition. However, to limit the Town's options simply because a capital project is not planned for at the present time would ultimately be shortsighted.

There is no question that the sale of the property to the YMCA would yield the most lucrative financial return to the Town since, in addition to the cash for sale of the land, the current YMCA building would be returned to the tax rolls. However, the loss of future development options might ultimately be more costly to the Town from both a cost and land-use perspective. A recent example of such a scenario would be the sale of the former Burr Farms school property. It is quite possible that the land could have been used to alleviate some of the school needs that were recently squeezed onto the former NIKE site property on North Avenue. It should be noted that, if in the future, the Y moves from its present location to another site in Westport, the lucrative Post Road property would still be placed on the tax rolls to generate additional revenue to the Town (however, there would be some net loss as their new property would be removed from the tax rolls).

In analyzing the Y's proposal, the Planning and Zoning Department notes that for the Y to be compliant with the Town's zoning regulations, a 90,000-square foot building with required on-site parking would need more than eight acres of land. That would represent 38% of the property's total area. As mentioned, because the amount proposed by the Y represents the "heart" of the property, options for the Town in the future would be significantly limited due to its complex topography. Conversely, the property along the ridge that has been proposed for sale has been deemed less useful for purposes of future municipal development.

Understandably, supporters of the YMCA will be very disappointed that sale of the property requested by the Y has not been recommended. No one disputes that the Y is an integral part of the community. It is important to underscore that the question before the administration was not open space versus the YMCA or even the YMCA with the balance remaining as a park. In fact, the central issue for the Town was to assess its own present and future needs.

On a personal note, I taught infant swim classes at the Y for several years. I know first hand that the Y provides extremely beneficial services and enhances the Westport community. However, as First Selectman I believe it imperative that the Town must preserve *its* future options as a first priority.

Next Steps:

- RTM members are invited to tour the property on Friday, November 5th, at 9:00 a.m. or 3:00 p.m. with representatives of the Planning and Zoning department. Individuals will be able to view the proposed YMCA "lot" as well as the proposed lots for subdivision on the property's ridge. As always, the public is invited.
- A sense of the meeting vote has been requested of the RTM at the November 9th session.
- Based upon the outcome of the November 9th RTM meeting, the administration will consider preparing and presenting an 8-24 Report request for dispossession of a portion of the Baron's South property to the Planning and Zoning Commission for approval. (Date to be determined).
- In addition, it is the administration's intention to contact and begin work with a non-profit municipal space planning organization such as Project for Public Spaces. A thorough review of the downtown area is warranted and may in fact help to solve the Y's as well as some of the Town's other downtown challenges, including parking and better utilization of the Jesup Green area.

I look forward to meeting with the RTM next Tuesday as we plan next steps for what is a very special and very important piece of Town-owned land.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Diane Goss Farrell
First Selectman

DGF:ps

Enclosures

cc: Board of Finance
Board of Education
Board of Selectmen
Planning & Zoning Commission
Zoning Board of Appeals
Parks & Recreation Commission



WESTPORT CONNECTICUT

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

TOWN HALL, 110 MYRTLE AVENUE

WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880

(203) 341-1030

(203) 341-1079

Memorandum

To: Diane G. Farrell
First Selectman

From: Katherine Barnard 
Director Planning and Zoning

Date: November 1, 1999

Re: Development Options
Baron's Property South
22.4 acres
SW corner Post Road East, Compo Road South and Imperial Avenue
Assessor's Map 5318-1
Lots: 99, 100, 101, 102, 117, 112
Zoning Districts: A - Single Family half-acre
GBD - General Business District
RPOD - Restricted Professional Office District

In order to provide you with some land use and development information about the Town-owned property known as the Baron's Property South, Planning Assistant Alicia Mozian and I have visited the property, reviewed the Westport Zoning Regulations, the 1997 Plan of Conservation and Development that outlines the Town's municipal needs and the YMCA's proposal for a facility on this property.

The majority of the property is zoned A single-family half acre. A small portion of the property located on Imperial Avenue is zoned RPOD, Restricted Professional Office District and a portion of the property fronting on Post Road East is zoned General Business District.

The Westport Zoning Regulations would allow on this property, with a Special Permit, any municipal uses, community cultural uses, daycare centers, public or private schools, private and public recreational uses and other Special Permit uses. The property could also be subdivided into 20, one-half acre lots for single-family homes. The RPOD area could be used as a small professional office or apartments. The General Business District could accommodate a commercial building.

Any development of the parcel should take into account the site's natural beauty by preserving as much of the existing slopes and as many large trees as possible.

Subdivision Potential for Possible Sale

The Planning and Zoning staff has developed a proposed subdivision plan for five (5) oversized lots along the east side of the property fronting on Compo Road South.

These proposed lots would not require the construction of new roads, but instead would make use of the existing driveways and save existing trees and topography. (See attached memo for more subdivision details.)

The proposed subdivision would exclude the structure directly on Compo Road South at the southern end of the property in order to maintain this structure for continuing use by the Department of Public Works as a storage facility. A variance for lot area will be needed to create this separate lot.

The General Business District portion of the property that fronts on Post Road East contains a lot area of 1.2 acres. The Westport Zoning Regulations would allow a two-story building approximately 7,000 sq. ft. in size with 40 parking spaces to accommodate a retail establishment. However, the ingress and egress for this part of the property would be on Post Road East in the vicinity of one of the Town's busiest intersections.

The Town would be better served if this portion of the property were preserved as an open, green area, thereby eliminating further traffic congestion at the Post Road East/Compo Road South intersection.

Municipal Uses and Facilities

The 1997 Plan of Conservation and Development recommended the purchase of Baron's Property South and the Community Facility Map contained in the 1997 Plan indicates that the property should be used for municipal purposes.

On March 13, 1997 the Planning and Zoning Commission issued a positive report to the First Selectman regarding the purchase of Baron's Property South.

The findings of the Planning and Zoning Commission were as follows:

- The existing site and facilities are located in an area that is accessible to the entire Town.
- There is a need for land for municipal facilities.
- The buildings on the site may lend themselves to reuse for certain Town functions.
- The existing topography and trees are a visual asset to the community.

The municipal uses and facilities that could be placed on Baron's Property South are as follows:

- Playing fields
- The maintenance facility for the Parks and Recreation Department
- Public Works storage building
- The senior center
- The police station
- Open Space

Playing Fields

A multipurpose field/ball field combination would need an area of 460' X 380', plus 30 parking spaces, for a total of 4.2 acres.

A multipurpose field only would need an area of 390' X 255', plus 30 parking spaces, for a total of 2.5 acres.

The playing fields could be placed on the west side of the property with access off of Imperial Avenue and the parking could be accommodated on the north property line along the commercial zone. Either size fields could meet the required setbacks and provide adequate parking. The site can only accommodate either the multipurpose field/ball field or the multipurpose field, not both.

The multipurpose field/ ball field would require more excavation of the site.

Parks and Recreation Maintenance Facility

There is a need for a new Parks and Recreation maintenance facility. The 1997 Plan of Conservation and Development recommends relocating this facility from its current location at Longshore Club Park.

There is an area for this facility on the west side of the property near the existing garage.

This facility would require a 5000 sq. ft. building with 18-20 parking spaces, which would require an area of 105' X 105', or a total area of 6,000 sq. ft.

Public Works Storage Building

The existing building on Compo Road South is already in use by Public Works, is a suitable use for the property with a good location for easy access and serves an important Town function. A variance for lot area would be required if lots were developed for sale on Compo Road South.

Senior Center

A 12,000 square foot Senior Center with 70 parking spaces would need an area of approximately 33,000 sq. ft. or .76 acres.

This facility could also be placed on the relatively flat area of the property on the west end with access off of Imperial Avenue.

Police Station

A two-story 60,000 sq. ft Police Station with 125 parking spaces could be located in the same area if the Police Station were to be relocated from 50 Jesup Road.

This proposed facility could be constructed in an area of 67,500-sq. ft. or 1.55 acres and provide more parking for the police department.

One or two of the above mentioned municipal facilities could be accommodated on the west side of the property along with the development of the area along Compo Road South as building lots, or with an open space use for passive recreation and walking trails.

There is ample room on the west end of the property to accommodate the Parks and Recreation maintenance facility along with either the Police Station, Senior Center or playing fields. However, coupling the Police Station with any use other than the maintenance facility is not advisable because of the amount of traffic generated by the facility. The playing field could not be coupled with another use other than the maintenance facility because of the amount of land needed for the field and the required parking.

Community Facilities

Westport/Weston YMCA Proposed Facility

The Westport Zoning Regulations consider non-commercial recreational clubs Special Permit uses; therefore, they can be located in any zoning district in Town if the Planning and Zoning Commission, after a public hearing, grants the Special Permit. The YMCA is a noncommercial recreational club.

If the Town of Westport is to consider the placement of the YMCA on Baron's South, the following zoning issues need to be addressed:

Coverage: The total area of the property purchased by the Town is 22.4 acres.

The YMCA proposes to purchase 3 acres for the building and construct parking on 2 acres of Town-owned land.

The Residence A zone allows 15% building coverage; therefore, a building with a footprint of 19,602-sq. ft. (15% of the lot area of 130,680-sq. ft.) would be allowed.

The proposal is to construct an approximately 90,000 sq. ft. building with an approximate footprint of 56,160 sq. ft, or 43%, building coverage.

If the YMCA were to purchase 5 acres of property (217,800-sq. ft.), the estimated building coverage would be 22.50%.

The YMCA would need to purchase 8.6 acres in order to comply with the 15% building coverage requirement. Our analysis thus far does not include determining compliance with the 25% total coverage requirement for on site parking.

Setbacks: It has been determined that the Baron's property as a whole has 3 fronts from which a 30 ft. front setback would be measured. These are measured from Post Road East, Compo Road South and Imperial Avenue. Property lines that run parallel to these roads are fronts and property lines that run perpendicular to these roads are sides. Only 1 rear has been established and that is along the most southwestern boundary. It measures approximately 330 ft. in length.

Usually a 15 ft. side setback is not required for parking areas. However, since the Y will be a Special Permit Use, the Planning and Zoning Commission can require more stringent setbacks in order to protect surrounding residential property owners.

Frontage: The proposed lot line configuration proposed by the YMCA would allow the 20 ft. frontage on either Post Road East or Imperial Avenue. At least one of these must be maintained in order to comply with the frontage requirements in the Westport Zoning Regulations.

Parking: The proposed lot configuration by the Y indicates the intention to locate the majority of the parking for the building on the Town's property. According to the Westport Zoning Regulations, parking must be located on the same lot as the proposed use.

Excavation and Fill: There will be significant disruption of the natural topography due to the placement of the building in the proposed location, or any location on the Baron's property. This will require extensive excavation and filling of land. The maximum amount of fill allowed on this property in accordance with Section 32-8 of the Westport Zoning Regulations will need to be determined.

Westport Historical Society

The Westport Historical Society has indicated an interest in purchasing the brick building which was the Baron's residence.

If the existing house were to be sold to the Westport Historical Society, a parking area with approximately 20 spaces would need to be constructed near the house. This would require substantial disturbance of this part of the property.

Group Home

One of the existing houses could be used as a group home. The Tudor house at the south end of the property would be the most suitable. A slightly enlarged parking area would be required, but could easily be accommodated in the area of this existing house.

Either one or both of the above two uses could use existing houses on the proposed subdivision lots.

Conclusion

If the YMCA were to construct their facility and required parking on Baron's Property South, this would encompass approximately one third of the property and generate high traffic volumes; therefore, the rest of the property should be left as passive open space.

A mixture of some of the previously mentioned uses, except for the YMCA, could be accommodated on the property and still leave some open space for passive recreation, thereby meeting several different community needs on Baron's Property South.

Attachment

Memorandum

To: Kathy Barnard, Planning and Zoning Director

From: Alicia Mozian, Planning Assistant

Date: July 15, 1999

Re: Proposed 5 Lot Subdivision Layout for Baron's Property South

Attached is a possible 5 lot subdivision layout for Baron's Property South. It was drawn after you and I walked the site on July 14, 1999 and after examining the contour map of the property. Special attention was given to the unique characteristics of the land. Specifically, the plan was drawn with the intent of:

- Protecting existing topography;
- Preserving existing trees; and
- Utilizing existing driveways.

After careful consideration, it was determined that it was in the best interest of preserving the character of the land, that only 2 new house sites be identified, which along with the existing 3 houses, would result in a total of 5 lots.

Rather than building new roads and ruining the protective and heavily-vegetated slopes along Compo Road South, it was determined that the 2 existing driveways currently serving the 3 existing houses be utilized to serve the 2 additional building sites. Using this approach will also substantially save on the development costs since no new roads will have to be built. In addition, since this stretch of Compo Road South is State Route 136, no DOT approval for additional curbcuts will be required.

One of the existing driveways will have to serve 3 lots. This will require a waiver of the driveway ordinance by the Board of Selectman and/or a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals of Section 34-11.5 for maximum grades.

Each lot was laid out with the intent of preserving existing slopes and trees to the greatest extent possible, as well as using the existing driveways. As a result, each lot is over-sized in that each is more than the ½ acre required in a Residence A zoning district. Also, the lots have to be oversized because only 20% of the steep-sloped area can be counted

toward the minimum lot area requirement. Lot 4 in particular is significantly larger since it contains the greatest amount of steep slopes.

Lot 4 could be further extended to the rear to include the present driveway. As currently drawn, lot 5 would be accessed via the driveway on lot 4 and then cross over onto town-owned land. This would require a right-of-way from the town and the owner of lot 4. Instead, if the rear lot line of lot 4 were extended to include the driveway, lot 5 would only need a right-of-way over lot 4.

Lot lines to the rear were made with intent of following contour lines. This is the reason lots 2 and 4 include a triangular-shaped appendage. The triangle in each case is also relatively flat and would give the property owner some more usable land.

Another factor in lot layout was the need to satisfy the lot shape requirement of accommodating a 100 ft. x 150 ft. rectangle of which no more than 20% of the rectangle can contain steep slopes.

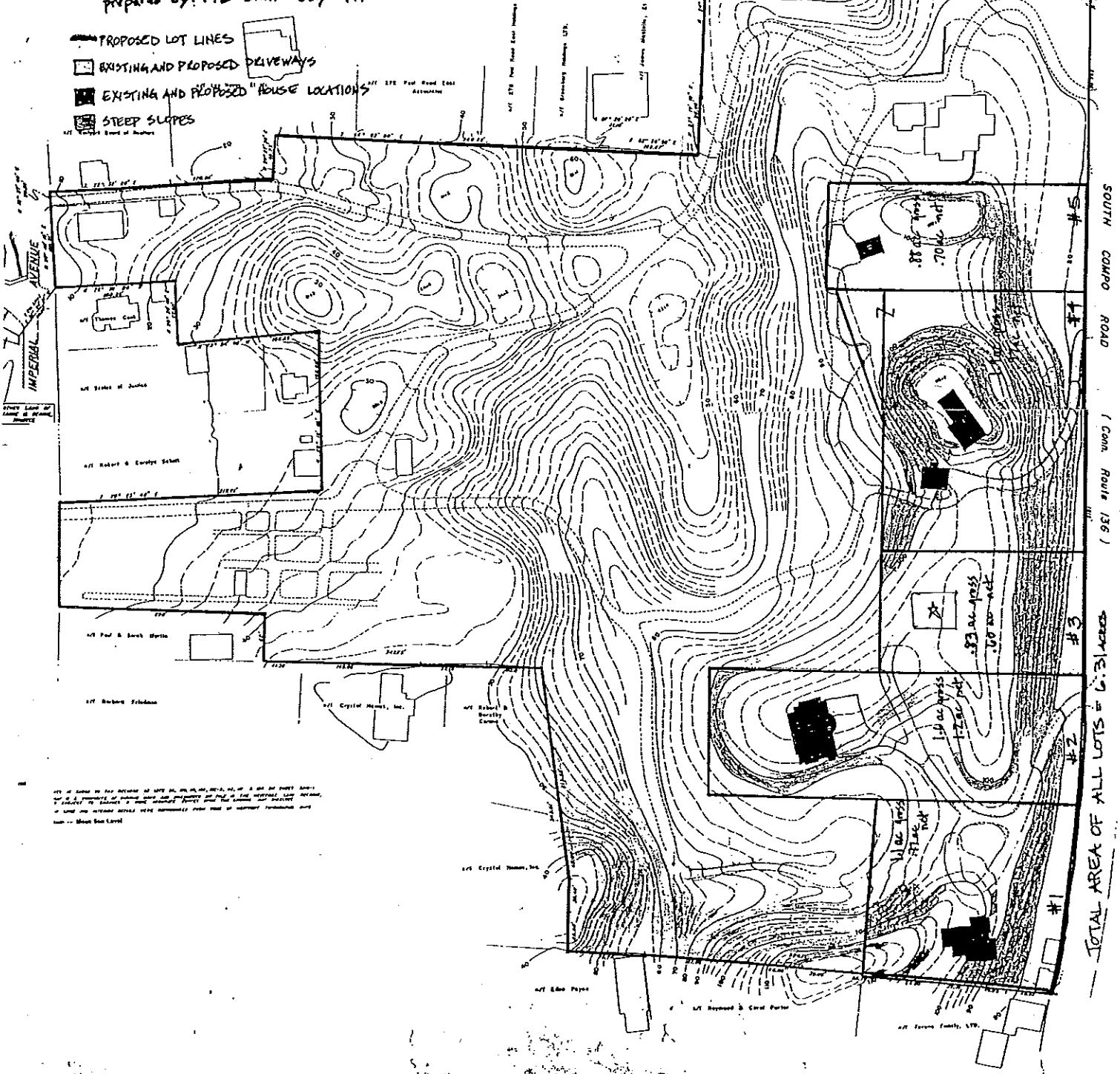
It is recommended that the steep slopes that parallel Compo Road South be designated as a Conservation Easement Area. This would protect this steeply-sloped area from being cut, filled or denuded. It will also help to protect the present view along Compo Road South and maintain the seclusion of the existing and proposed houses.

Barons5lot

POSSIBLE 5 LOT SUBDIVISION LAYOUT OF BARON'S PROPERTY SOUTH 1" = 80'

prepared by: P:2 Staff July 1999

- PROPOSED LOT LINES
- EXISTING AND PROPOSED DRIVEWAYS
- EXISTING AND PROPOSED HOUSE LOCATIONS
- ▨ STEEP SLOPES

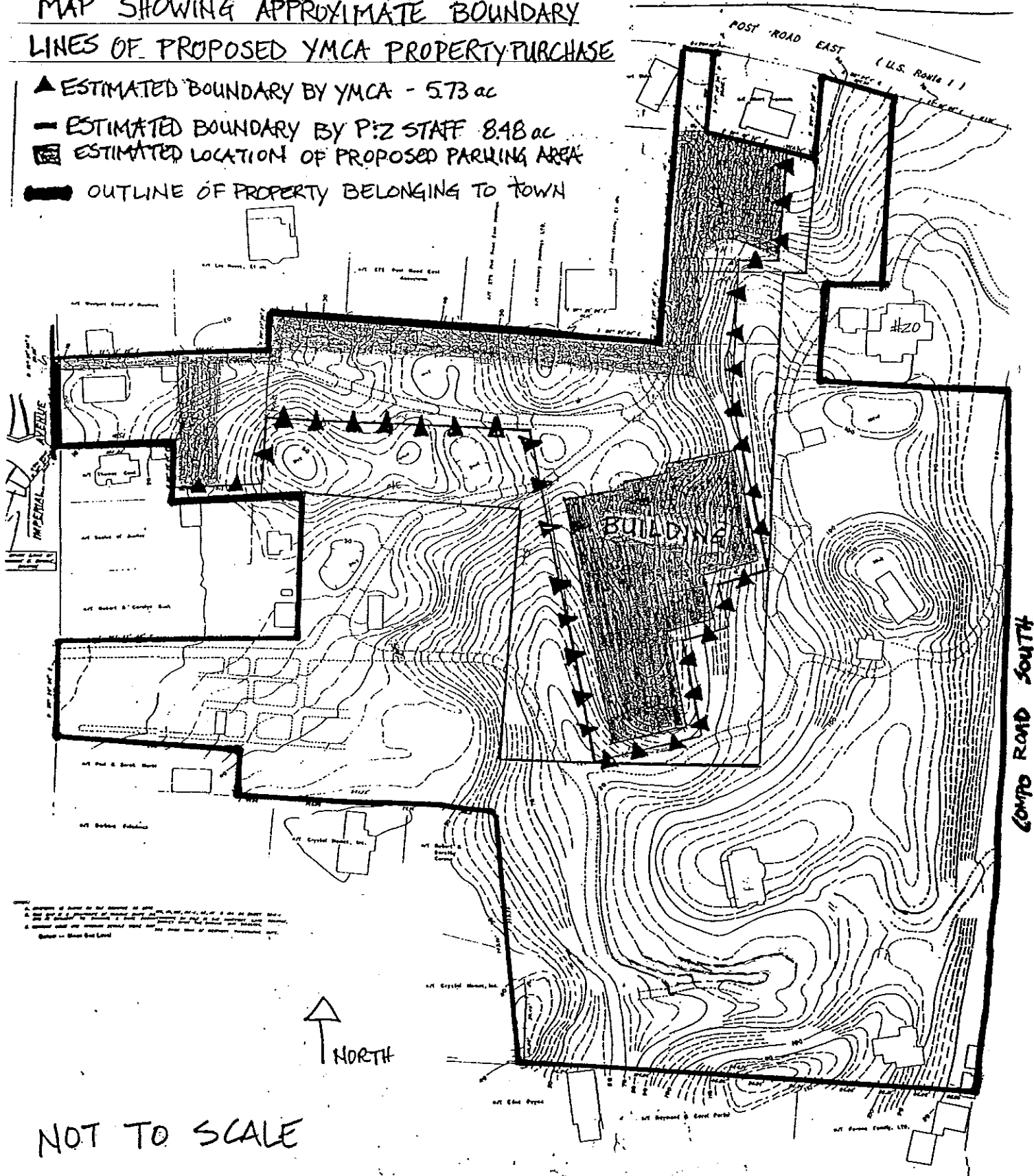


SOUTH COMPO ROAD (U.S. Route 136)
 TOTAL AREA OF ALL LOTS = 6.2 ACRES

NOT TO SCALE OR FOR PROVISIONAL USE UNLESS SPECIFICALLY NOTED OTHERWISE. THIS PLAN IS THE PROPERTY OF THE ENGINEER AND IS NOT TO BE REPRODUCED OR TRANSMITTED IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS, ELECTRONIC OR MECHANICAL, INCLUDING PHOTOCOPYING, RECORDING, OR BY ANY INFORMATION STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEM. WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE ENGINEER. ALL DIMENSIONS SHOWN ARE UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED. MEASUREMENTS ARE FROM MEAN SEA LEVEL.

MAP SHOWING APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY LINES OF PROPOSED YMCA PROPERTY PURCHASE

- ▲ ESTIMATED BOUNDARY BY YMCA - 573 ac
- ESTIMATED BOUNDARY BY P&Z STAFF 848 ac
- ▣ ESTIMATED LOCATION OF PROPOSED PARKING AREA
- ▭ OUTLINE OF PROPERTY BELONGING TO TOWN



NOT TO SCALE

PREPARED BY P&Z STAFF NOV. 1, 1999

Memorandum

To: Baron's South Planning Committee
From: Doug Bowen, Arlene Donahue, Bud Frey
Date: 07/27/99
Re: Baron's South - Existing Building Evaluation

CONCLUSION

The charge of our sub-committee was to evaluate what should be done with the existing buildings located on the Baron's South property. We have concluded that an appropriate course of action may be for the town to sell the three existing houses as private residences along with two unimproved lots for residential development. This plan could result in net sale proceeds to the Town of Westport in the range of \$2,400,000 to \$3,100,000. In turn, these funds could then possibly be re-deployed to either purchase additional open land or to construct new more efficiently designed buildings to satisfy the needs of the town. The basis for this conclusion is discussed below.

VALUATION

In evaluating the value and best use of the structures, we have received input from local real estate professionals. As a result, the following are estimates of value for the three existing houses in "as is" condition and adjacent sites thereto.

Mansion w/ 1.5 acre lot	\$1,000,000 - \$1,300,000
Tudor house w/ 1 acre lot	\$700,000 - \$800,000
"Ivy House" w/ apartment above garage and 1 acre lot	\$600,000 - \$700,000

Thus, the three houses may currently be worth between \$2,300,000 and \$2,800,000. Deducting a sales commission of 6% and miscellaneous closing costs of say 2% results in a net value in the range of approximately \$2,100,000 to \$2,600,000.

Based on the analysis completed by Planning and Zoning, two additional lots could be created in the upper ridge area, adjacent to the three existing houses, for a total of five residential lots. The number of unimproved lots was limited to two in order to protect existing topography, preserve existing trees and use existing driveways. Assuming these lots were the equivalent of one-half acre lots, the following are estimates of their value. These estimates are before and after deducting an assumed 10% sale commission and say 2% for miscellaneous closing costs for a total sales cost of 12%:

.5 acre lot (before sales cost)	\$350,000 - \$450,000
.5 acre lot (after sales cost)	\$310,000 - \$400,000

Thus, the value estimate after commissions for two unimproved lots is in the range of \$620,000 to \$800,000.

In total, the value estimate for the three houses and two unimproved lots ranges from \$2,700,000 to \$3,400,000. If it is determined that the best approach for the Town is to sell the sub-divided property to a developer, a discount in the price of about 10% might need to be applied, resulting in a lower value estimate of \$2,400,000 to \$3,100,000. These estimates assume no major structural problems with the buildings and do not reflect any substantial infrastructure costs that may be incurred to sub-divide the land e.g., roadway improvements, utility lines, etc.

In order to sub-divide the land, all structures would need to conform to existing zoning regulations. Because of set back issues, this would require the demolition of the building on Compo Road South. This building is currently being used by the Town for storage and appears to be in a poor state of repair. As such no value is attributed to this structure.

Regarding the house on Imperial Avenue, it is very difficult to estimate its value given the small size of the lot and poor condition of the house. Furthermore until a determination is made as to the ultimate use of the remainder of the Baron's South property, the building should be held by the Town in the event the underlying land is required to enhance accessibility into or out of the property.

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RECOMMENDATION

Clearly, the highest and best use of the three houses is as private residences. Furthermore the cost to convert the mansion, which was constructed in 1959, to commercial uses is substantial (satisfying ADA issues, installing sprinklers, modifying electrical and mechanical systems, access issues, creating additional parking etc.) and could approximate \$1 million. In the case of the other two

adjacent existing houses, conversion is not practical for alternative uses. These conclusions are supported by the February 7, 1998 report prepared by the Selectmen's Study Committee. Furthermore, the properties are located on very hilly terrain, which makes accessibility relatively difficult. Thus, we believe that the best alternative for the town may be to sell the aforementioned three houses and two additional lots to generate sales proceeds in the range of \$2,300,000 to \$3,100,000. These funds in turn could possibly be re-deployed to either purchase more open land or construct new buildings to better satisfy current needs (such as a senior/community center). As new buildings would be designed for their intended use, they would be more cost effective to construct and more functional for their users.

The total land involved with subdividing the property into five lots is 6.7 acres. Thus selling the lots would reduce the total acreage of Baron's South from 22.8 to 16.1 acres.

In addition, consideration should be given as part of the subdivision design to determine if the plan can provide for the Town retaining a "greenway" which would connect Compo Road South to the remaining Baron's South open land. This would provide pedestrian accessibility in the event the Town ever desires to formalize the concept of "an emerald necklace".

In the case of the house on Imperial Avenue, the building should be held until a determination is made of whether the town requires the underlying land to enhance accessibility into or out of the property. If it is determined that the underlying land is not needed, a desirable alternative may be to lease the house to a third party in "as is" condition and allow the user to make all necessary improvements. In this case, the Town should require in the lease a termination option to allow it to reclaim the property at future point in time.

As discussed in the February 7, 1998 report prepared by the Selectmen's Study Committee, measures should be taken to properly maintain and repair the existing buildings, in particular the three houses on the upper ridge, to prevent any further deterioration in their condition until such time as a plan is implemented.



WESTPORT CONNECTICUT
PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT
TOWN HALL, 110 MYRTLE AVENUE
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880
(203) 341-1030 • (203) 341-1079
(203) 454-6145 - fax

July 16, 1999

Arlene Donahue
8 Ruta Court
Westport, CT 06880

Re: Baron's Property South
SW Corner Post Road East/Comp Road South

Dear Arlene:

On July 8, 1999 I met with you, Doug Bowen and Bud Frey to discuss a possible subdivision of the east side of the Baron's Property South.

Attached is a proposed plan for 5 oversized lots in the A (1/2 acre) zone.

These proposed lots would not require the construction of new roads, but would make use of the existing driveways and save existing trees and topography.

Please let me know if you need additional information

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Katherine Barnard".

Katherine Barnard
Director Planning and Zoning

Attachment

Cc: Diane G. Farrell
First Selectman

Barons subdivision

Memorandum

To: Kathy Barnard, Planning and Zoning Director

From: Alicia Mozian, Planning Assistant

Date: July 15, 1999

Re: Proposed 5 Lot Subdivision Layout for Baron's Property South

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Barons5lot



WESTPORT CONNECTICUT

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

TOWN HALL, 110 MYRTLE AVENUE

WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880

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Memorandum

To: Diane G. Farrell
First Selectman

From: Katherine Barnard *K. Barnard*
Director Planning and Zoning

Date: November 1, 1999

Re: Development Options
Baron's Property South
22.4 acres
SW corner Post Road East, Compo Road South and Imperial Avenue
Assessor's Map 5318-1
Lots: 99, 100, 101, 102, 117, 112
Zoning Districts: A - Single Family half-acre
GBD - General Business District
RPOD - Restricted Professional Office District

In order to provide you with some land use and development information about the Town-owned property known as the Baron's Property South, Planning Assistant Alicia Mojian and I have visited the property, reviewed the Westport Zoning Regulations, the 1997 Plan of Conservation and Development that outlines the Town's municipal needs and the YMCA's proposal for a facility on this property.

The majority of the property is zoned A single-family half acre. A small portion of the property located on Imperial Avenue is zoned RPOD, Restricted Professional Office District and a portion of the property fronting on Post Road East is zoned General Business District.

The Westport Zoning Regulations would allow on this property, with a Special Permit, any municipal uses, community cultural uses, daycare centers, public or private schools, private and public recreational uses and other Special Permit uses. The property could also be subdivided into 20, one-half acre lots for single-family homes. The RPOD area could be used as a small professional office or apartments. The General Business District could accommodate a commercial building.

Any development of the parcel should take into account the site's natural beauty by preserving as much of the existing slopes and as many large trees as possible.

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Subdivision Potential for Possible Sale

The Planning and Zoning staff has developed a proposed subdivision plan for five (5) oversized lots along the east side of the property fronting on Compo Road South.

These proposed lots would not require the construction of new roads, but instead would make use of the existing driveways and save existing trees and topography. (See attached memo for more subdivision details.)

The proposed subdivision would exclude the structure directly on Compo Road South at the southern end of the property in order to maintain this structure for continuing use by the Department of Public Works as a storage facility. A variance for lot area will be needed to create this separate lot.

The General Business District portion of the property that fronts on Post Road East contains a lot area of 1.2 acres. The Westport Zoning Regulations would allow a two-story building approximately 7,000 sq. ft. in size with 40 parking spaces to accommodate a retail establishment. However, the ingress and egress for this part of the property would be on Post Road East in the vicinity of one of the Town's busiest intersections.

The Town would be better served if this portion of the property were preserved as an open, green area, thereby eliminating further traffic congestion at the Post Road East/Compo Road South intersection.

Municipal Uses and Facilities

The 1997 Plan of Conservation and Development recommended the purchase of Baron's Property South and the Community Facility Map contained in the 1997 Plan indicates that the property should be used for municipal purposes.

On March 13, 1997 the Planning and Zoning Commission issued a positive report to the First Selectman regarding the purchase of Baron's Property South.

The findings of the Planning and Zoning Commission were as follows:

- The existing site and facilities are located in an area that is accessible to the entire Town.
- There is a need for land for municipal facilities.
- The buildings on the site may lend themselves to reuse for certain Town functions.
- The existing topography and trees are a visual asset to the community.

The municipal uses and facilities that could be placed on Baron's Property South are as follows:

- Playing fields
- The maintenance facility for the Parks and Recreation Department
- Public Works storage building
- The senior center
- The police station
- Open Space

Playing Fields

A multipurpose field/ball field combination would need an area of 460' X 380', plus 30 parking spaces, for a total of 4.2 acres.

A multipurpose field only would need an area of 390' X 255', plus 30 parking spaces, for a total of 2.5 acres.

The playing fields could be placed on the west side of the property with access off of Imperial Avenue and the parking could be accommodated on the north property line along the commercial zone. Either size fields could meet the required setbacks and provide adequate parking. The site can only accommodate either the multipurpose field/ball field or the multipurpose field, not both.

The multipurpose field/ ball field would require more excavation of the site.

Parks and Recreation Maintenance Facility

There is a need for a new Parks and Recreation maintenance facility. The 1997 Plan of Conservation and Development recommends relocating this facility from its current location at Longshore Club Park.

There is an area for this facility on the west side of the property near the existing garage.

This facility would require a 5000 sq. ft. building with 18-20 parking spaces, which would require an area of 105' X 105', or a total area of 6,000 sq. ft.

Public Works Storage Building

The existing building on Compo Road South is already in use by Public Works, is a suitable use for the property with a good location for easy access and serves an important Town function. A variance for lot area would be required if lots were developed for sale on Compo Road South.

Senior Center

A 12,000 square foot Senior Center with 70 parking spaces would need an area of approximately 33,000 sq. ft. or .76 acres.

This facility could also be placed on the relatively flat area of the property on the west end with access off of Imperial Avenue.

Police Station

A two-story 60,000 sq. ft Police Station with 125 parking spaces could be located in the same area if the Police Station were to be relocated from 50 Jesup Road.

This proposed facility could be constructed in an area of 67,500-sq. ft. or 1.55 acres and provide more parking for the police department.

One or two of the above mentioned municipal facilities could be accommodated on the west side of the property along with the development of the area along Compo Road South as building lots, or with an open space use for passive recreation and walking trails.

There is ample room on the west end of the property to accommodate the Parks and Recreation maintenance facility along with either the Police Station, Senior Center or playing fields. However, coupling the Police Station with any use other than the maintenance facility is not advisable because of the amount of traffic generated by the facility. The playing field could not be coupled with another use other than the maintenance facility because of the amount of land needed for the field and the required parking.

Community Facilities

Westport/Weston YMCA Proposed Facility

The Westport Zoning Regulations consider non-commercial recreational clubs Special Permit uses; therefore, they can be located in any zoning district in Town if the Planning and Zoning Commission, after a public hearing, grants the Special Permit. The YMCA is a noncommercial recreational club.

If the Town of Westport is to consider the placement of the YMCA on Baron's South, the following zoning issues need to be addressed:

Coverage: The total area of the property purchased by the Town is 22.4 acres.

The YMCA proposes to purchase 3 acres for the building and construct parking on 2 acres of Town-owned land.

The Residence A zone allows 15% building coverage; therefore, a building with a footprint of 19,602-sq. ft. (15% of the lot area of 130,680-sq. ft.) would be allowed.

The proposal is to construct an approximately 90,000 sq. ft. building with an approximate footprint of 56,160 sq. ft, or 43%, building coverage.

If the YMCA were to purchase 5 acres of property (217,800-sq. ft.), the estimated building coverage would be 22.50%.

The YMCA would need to purchase 8.6 acres in order to comply with the 15% building coverage requirement. Our analysis thus far does not include determining compliance with the 25% total coverage requirement for on site parking.

Setbacks: It has been determined that the Baron's property as a whole has 3 fronts from which a 30 ft. front setback would be measured. These are measured from Post Road East, Compo Road South and Imperial Avenue. Property lines that run parallel to these roads are fronts and property lines that run perpendicular to these roads are sides. Only 1 rear has been established and that is along the most southwestern boundary. It measures approximately 330 ft. in length.

Usually a 15 ft. side setback is not required for parking areas. However, since the Y will be a Special Permit Use, the Planning and Zoning Commission can require more stringent setbacks in order to protect surrounding residential property owners.

Frontage: The proposed lot line configuration proposed by the YMCA would allow the 20 ft. frontage on either Post Road East or Imperial Avenue. At least one of these must be maintained in order to comply with the frontage requirements in the Westport Zoning Regulations.

Parking: The proposed lot configuration by the Y indicates the intention to locate the majority of the parking for the building on the Town's property. According to the Westport Zoning Regulations, parking must be located on the same lot as the proposed use.

Excavation and Fill: There will be significant disruption of the natural topography due to the placement of the building in the proposed location, or any location on the Baron's property. This will require extensive excavation and filling of land. The maximum amount of fill allowed on this property in accordance with Section 32-8 of the Westport Zoning Regulations will need to be determined.

Westport Historical Society

The Westport Historical Society has indicated an interest in purchasing the brick building which was the Baron's residence.

If the existing house were to be sold to the Westport Historical Society, a parking area with approximately 20 spaces would need to be constructed near the house. This would require substantial disturbance of this part of the property.

Group Home

One of the existing houses could be used as a group home. The Tudor house at the south end of the property would be the most suitable. A slightly enlarged parking area would be required, but could easily be accommodated in the area of this existing house.

Either one or both of the above two uses could use existing houses on the proposed subdivision lots.

Conclusion

If the YMCA were to construct their facility and required parking on Baron's Property South, this would encompass approximately one third of the property and generate high traffic volumes; therefore, the rest of the property should be left as passive open space.

A mixture of some of the previously mentioned uses, except for the YMCA, could be accommodated on the property and still leave some open space for passive recreation, thereby meeting several different community needs on Baron's Property South.

Attachment

Memorandum

To: Kathy Barnard, Planning and Zoning Director

From: Alicia Mozian, Planning Assistant

Date: July 15, 1999

Re: Proposed 5 Lot Subdivision Layout for Baron's Property South

Attached is a possible 5 lot subdivision layout for Baron's Property South. It was drawn after you and I walked the site on July 14, 1999 and after examining the contour map of the property. Special attention was given to the unique characteristics of the land. Specifically, the plan was drawn with the intent of:

- Protecting existing topography;
- Preserving existing trees; and
- Utilizing existing driveways.

After careful consideration, it was determined that it was in the best interest of preserving the character of the land, that only 2 new house sites be identified, which along with the existing 3 houses, would result in a total of 5 lots.

Rather than building new roads and ruining the protective and heavily-vegetated slopes along Compo Road South, it was determined that the 2 existing driveways currently serving the 3 existing houses be utilized to serve the 2 additional building sites. Using this approach will also substantially save on the development costs since no new roads will have to be built. In addition, since this stretch of Compo Road South is State Route 136, no DOT approval for additional curbcuts will be required.

One of the existing driveways will have to serve 3 lots. This will require a waiver of the driveway ordinance by the Board of Selectman and/or a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals of Section 34-11.5 for maximum grades.

Each lot was laid out with the intent of preserving existing slopes and trees to the greatest extent possible, as well as using the existing driveways. As a result, each lot is over-sized in that each is more than the ½ acre required in a Residence A zoning district. Also, the lots have to be oversized because only 20% of the steeply-sloped area can be counted

toward the minimum lot area requirement. Lot 4 in particular is significantly larger since it contains the greatest amount of steep slopes.

Lot 4 could be further extended to the rear to include the present driveway. As currently drawn, lot 5 would be accessed via the driveway on lot 4 and then cross over onto town-owned land. This would require a right-of-way from the town and the owner of lot 4. Instead, if the rear lot line of lot 4 were extended to include the driveway, lot 5 would only need a right-of-way over lot 4.

Lot lines to the rear were made with intent of following contour lines. This is the reason lots 2 and 4 include a triangular-shaped appendage. The triangle in each case is also relatively flat and would give the property owner some more usable land.

Another factor in lot layout was the need to satisfy the lot shape requirement of accommodating a 100 ft. x 150 ft. rectangle of which no more than 20% of the rectangle can contain steep slopes.

It is recommended that the steep slopes that parallel Compo Road South be designated as a Conservation Easement Area. This would protect this steeply-sloped area from being cut, filled or denuded. It will also help to protect the present view along Compo Road South and maintain the seclusion of the existing and proposed houses.

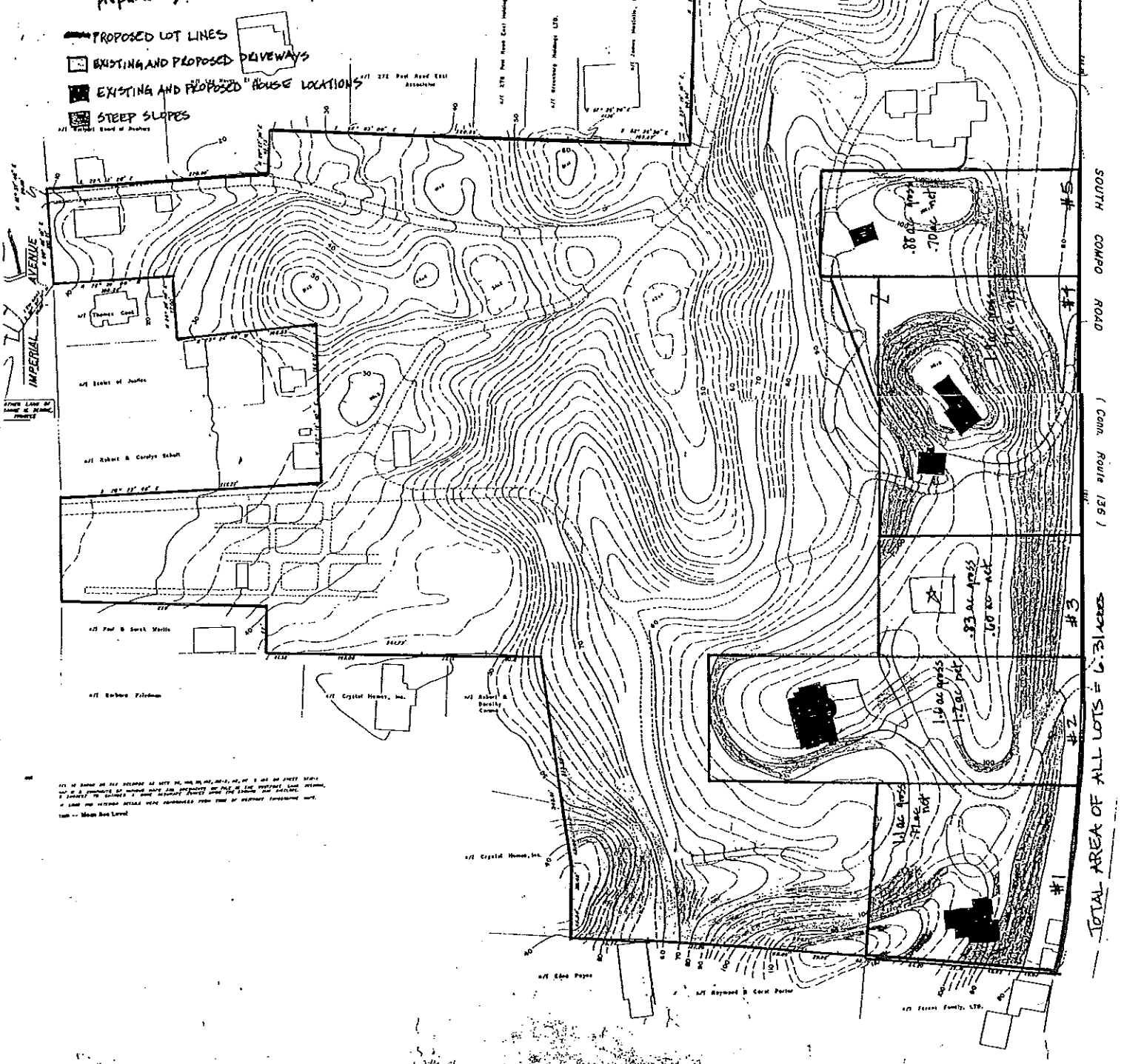
Barons5lot

POSSIBLE 5 LOT SUBDIVISION LAYOUT OF BARON'S PROPERTY SOUTH

1" = 80'

prepared by: P:2 Staff July 1999

- PROPOSED LOT LINES
- EXISTING AND PROPOSED DRIVEWAYS
- EXISTING AND PROPOSED HOUSE LOCATIONS
- STEEP SLOPES



SOUTH COMCO ROAD (Conn. Route 136)
TOTAL AREA OF ALL LOTS = 6.23 ACRES

THIS IS A PRELIMINARY PLAN. THE PROPERTY IS NOT TO BE CONVEYED BY THIS PLAN. THE PLAN IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY. THE PLAN IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE. THE PLAN IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE. THE PLAN IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.