

Government of the District of Columbia  
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3-D  
P.O. Box 40846  
Palisades Station  
Washington, D.C. 20016

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D.C. OFFICIALS

April 11, 2005

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis  
Chair  
Board of Zoning Adjustment  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Suite 210-S  
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Application # 17309  
Hearing Date: April 26, 2005

Dear Mr. Griffis:

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D held its regularly scheduled meeting on April 6, 2005, at Sibley Memorial Hospital's Ernst Auditorium with a quorum (5) present at all times. Notice of the meeting appeared in the Northwest Current on March 23 and 30, and April 6, 2005, and meeting notices were posted in the ANC area. The commission voted 7-0-0 to oppose the application of Dorchester Associates LLC for a special exception under section 2516, to allow thirteen detached single-family dwellings on a single subdivided lot, including of two sixteen foot wide roadways rather than twenty-five foot roadways under subsection 2516 (d) in the CBUT/R-1-A District in the 2800 block of Chain Bridge Road, NW.

Morton Bender of Dorchester Associates presented ANC 3D with architectural schemes for a thirteen house theoretical lot subdivision. As Mr. Bender had appeared before the commission on November 3, 2004, and there was little new material, his presentation was very brief. At the end of the previous meeting the commission requested a stormwater management plan, a traffic plan and a grading plan. Mr. Bender explained that a grading plan is unnecessary because all homes will be built to fit the natural contours of the property and will require no grade changes. New to this presentation was mention of plans to establish an architectural review board and homeowners association and that swimming pools and tennis courts would be prohibited.

Robert Sussman, representing The Chain Bridge Road/University Terrace Preservation Committee, also addressed the commission. His committee has serious concerns about the ability of the proposed stormwater management system to compensate for the

**BZA**

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**Exhibit No. 52**

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amount of impervious surface that would cover the property. The release of additional stormwater onto the steeply sloped terrain and any grade changes would likely exacerbate measures already taken to alleviate flooding by neighbors residing south of and behind the property as well as along the edge of Battery Kemble Park. He mentioned that Chain Bridge Road is a narrow winding road dating back to colonial times and the main entrance to the proposed development will pose safety challenges given the number of homes being planned. Mr. Sussman raised concern about the tree inventory and noted that the main driveway into the property is lined by an alley of Beech trees and only 12 feet wide. Widening the road to 16 feet would fatally damage a majority of those trees. Discussion ensued around the second entrance to the property which is located immediately adjacent to and above the proposed subdivision. This property, also owned by Mr. Bender, is the site of a historic building and an application has been filed with the Historic Preservation Review Board to determine the status of the road, whether or not it is also designated historic and if it can be widened and used to provide access to three homes in the subdivision.

An earlier site visit by commission members demonstrated that anyone walking in the park along the edge of Chain Bridge Road would be looking directly at and into the windows of houses that will tower over the park and road. It was noted that the plans appear to be in conflict with the intent of the overlay district which is meant to protect the park-like setting. It was recommended that Mr. Bender consider granting generous conservation easements to the National Park Service along the entire front of his property.

The Commission reviewed all house designs from the perspective of lot occupancy, impervious surface coverage and their location in relation to Chain Bridge Road. Rear edges of the property were of especial concern as the area is steeply sloped down to immediate neighboring properties and an old retaining wall constructed of railroad ties has begun to fail. It appears that this area is mostly fill and has the potential for serious erosion. One enormous tree on the sloped rear area has already fallen onto a neighboring property and another is precariously perched.

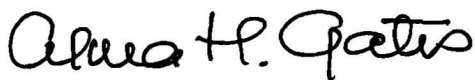
A motion was made to oppose the Application of Dorchester Associates as the developer did not meet the burden of proof. It was obvious that the project was designed to maximize development on each lot in a Tree and Slope Overlay District where minimum density is indicated. Plans provide lot coverage on a very steeply sloped piece of property at 85 percent and impervious surface coverage at 90 percent of what is allowed; the placement of houses, especially Lot 3 which is four feet off of Chain Bridge Road, is not in keeping with the purpose of the overlay district and will likely cause impacts to

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neighboring properties; several trees listed on the tree inventory could not be located on any of the plans; a geotechnical report has not been presented; a grading plan showing the implementation and placement of retaining walls and how the steeply sloped edges of the property will be stabilized has not been presented; a phasing plan for the project has not been presented nor has its length been determined; the traffic study, conducted immediately following a major holiday, omitted the speed at which cars travel along Chain Bridge Road past the hidden driveway entrance; and, a plan for stabilization of the construction site, parking and storage of equipment and workers' vehicles has not been presented.

Therefore, ANC 3D voted 7-0-0 to oppose the Application of Dorchester Associates and asks the Board to accord the commission's vote the "great weight" to which it is entitled under DC law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alma H. Gates". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Alma H. Gates  
Chair

Cc: Morton Bender  
Robert Sussman