

Centreville Village Plan

Chapter Three

LAND USE

3.1 Introduction

Centreville village is a traditional community originally populated by settlers in approximately 1750. There are indications that the first building was a log residence. By 1800, it had been supplanted by a stone residence, which eventually was used as a doctor's residence/office and now, with several additions, has become a private residence again. The history of this property is typical of many in the village.

Although other buildings are younger (most in the historic district were built between 1830 and 1880), they share similar histories of mixed-use: many were built as family residences and now serve as shops or offices, while others were designed to combine homes and businesses but are now single-purpose properties. In some cases, upper floors have been fitted for apartments above commercial establishments. This is the way of traditional villages.

Modern zoning regulations for unincorporated areas, such as the code first adopted by New Castle County in 1954, have favored division of uses. They have also included other directives that support suburban sub-divisions and shopping centers, but have not protected the aesthetics or evolved uses of traditional towns and villages. The recommendations in this chapter are based on conditions existing in the village in June, 2007, and support traditional development patterns for the future.

The Centreville Village Overlay District has been divided into seven segments for discussion purposes, with each segment reflecting current or possible uses, compatible street set backs and/or opportunities for inter-connective driveways and parking. The Village Overlay District segments are depicted on Map III-1. Additional information is provided graphically on the Core Area Opportunities Map, III-2.

3.2 General Recommendations

3.2.1 Applicable to all segments

- Encourage shared parking and access to minimize curb cuts on Kennett Pike and reduce turning movements.
- Pursue advanced septic treatment options.
- Use offices as the transition between commercial retail and adjacent residential areas.
- Treat entry points into the village at both the northern and southern ends as aesthetically important/visual entry areas.
- Explore expansion of the County historic overlay with area property owners.
- Discourage strongly the development of reverse subdivisions.

3.2.2 Applicable to Non-residential properties

- Encourage the use of on-street parking to help satisfy parking demands for existing structures.
- The business community should pursue strategies to ensure that the supply of parking meets the needs of businesses, residents and visitors without adversely impacting the quality of life of area residents.
- Maximize and diversify use of outdoor space to bring life to the street (i.e. café seating; cart with bouquets for sale at florist shop; street furniture; etc).
- Encourage second story residential use.
- Encourage retail/active uses on the first floor.
- Utilize more remote parking areas for employee use and allow customers to use the prime parking areas.
- Provide appropriate landscaping and screening.
- Locate service equipment (including HVAC, dumpsters, loading areas, etc.) to minimize visual and other impacts on adjacent properties. Physically screen said areas with appropriate fencing, walls and/or landscaping.
- Develop a comprehensive Signage Plan. The plan should coordinate all directional (way-finding), parking and business

signage to ensure the visual impact of new signs is functional, attractive and appropriate.

3.3 Village Segments

3.3.1 Segment One: Residential North

(Eastside of Kennett Pike: 5900 Valley Way to 2 Selborne Drive
Westside of Kennett Pike: 5830 - 5922 Kennett Pike)

Segment one covers both sides of the Kennett Pike, beginning at the northern gateway and continuing to Center Avenue on the western side and just north of Lumber Industries (5811) on the eastern side. This segment is characterized by moderate single-family residences, many of which represent early 20th century village expansion. These structures are interspersed with entrances to several mid-century developments, which house the great majority of village residents.

Historic structures in this sector should be preserved for their architectural value and relationship to village history. It is recommended that on-street parking be maintained to supplement limited overflow parking for these properties.

Of the historic structures in this segment, the most prominent is the home at 5826 Kennett Pike, a substantial residence situated on a large lot on the southwestern edge of the sector. There could be interest in converting the use to a non-residential one, which may be appropriate; any adaptive reuse, however, should be transitional in nature, and any physical changes to the property should protect the historic integrity of the existing structure and its environs.

More modern homes in the village's surrounding subdivisions represent a site-plan departure from those on Kennett Pike. Attractive, well-maintained landscape buffers should be encouraged to screen sides and backs of development properties abutting the Pike.

While the Oberod property is located just outside the overlay to the north of this sector, there is considerable community interest in the future of this property and it merits mention in this Plan. Because this property serves

as an attractive entry into the Village, and its entire face to the Kennett Pike is zoned SE, it is recommended that a permanent open space protection mechanism be pursued for this portion of Oberod.

3.3.2 Segment Two: Northwest

(Westside only, 5810 - 5818 Kennett Pike)

This sector is well known for Buckleys Tavern. Also located within this sector are the Financial House, additional commercial space, and a large structure located to the rear of the Financial House property that was once used as a bus facility. This area may be considered for future commercial/mixed use space.

Off-street parking is currently limited and each property generally has its own access. While current ownership supports some shared access points within this sector, measures should be taken to ensure that remains the case in the future.

The majority of the structures within this sector are historically significant and worthy of protection. Minor additions may be appropriate to the rear of some existing structures. In addition, as depicted on the Core Opportunities Map, a small amount of additional square footage may be realized to the south of Buckleys. Any new construction should conform to the design guidelines and complement the existing historic character of this segment.

The outdoor table seating at Buckleys should be encouraged to continue and similar opportunities should be sought on nearby parcels. Keeping the street active will encourage pedestrians and strengthen business. Given the nature of the historic structures, display windows are limited and opportunities to bring the commercial uses to life at the street should be supported.

Because there is limited parking available in this sector, business owners are encouraged to seek parking options for their employees within reasonable walking distance, but beyond prime customer parking areas. Such parking arrangements should not have any negative impacts on surrounding residential areas or unfavorably impact other businesses.

The sidewalk along Kennett Pike should be established at five feet to provide consistency and enhance walkability. Widening to allow additional

commercial spillover activity to occur at the street level should be accomplished within existing right of way rather than through use of private property.

Care should be taken to protect the residences to the west. Adequate buffers/screening should be provided to ensure that noise and visual impacts do not adversely affect residents in that area. Any building or parking expansions should be designed to complement the architecture of existing structures and enhance the appeal of the village to both visitors and residents alike.

A pedestrian path to connect Quail Crossing to the village should also be considered.

3.3.3 Segment Three: Central Western (Unnamed Street to Owls Nest Road)

(Westside of Kennett Pike: 5800 - 5804; north side of Owls Nest Road 3 - 5)

This segment was anchored for many years by the Butler Veterinary Clinic to the north and Finkle's Dress Shop to the south. The Vet remains a strong presence within the sector, whereas Finkle's closed several years ago. As a testament to the attractiveness of the Village to businesses, the Finkle's property was quickly purchased by an entrepreneur who gave new life to the corner of Owls Nest Road and Kennett Pike. The Finkle's building is now occupied by the Centreville Café, Montrachet Fine Foods, and second-floor offices. Parking remains a problem and every effort should be made to eliminate the "back-out" parking spaces located near the intersection of Owls Nest Road and Kennett Pike.

This sector also contains limited upper story residential space, which should be encouraged to continue and expanded when possible.

Segment three could benefit from the creation of vehicular and pedestrian connections within the block, as depicted on the Core Opportunities Map. Currently, parking areas are not connected and customers must drive back out onto the Kennett Pike to access other businesses' parking areas. Within the block, behind existing buildings, walking and vehicular access ways could be added with cooperation of private property owners. This may also create the opportunity for shared and new parking. As noted in the previous

segment, landscaping and buffering needs to be provided to protect the residences to the west.

3.3.4 Segment Four: Southwest

(Westside of Kennett Pike: 5632 - 5722; and, 12 Owls Nest Road)

This segment is one of the most critical to the village. Inter-connective driveways and shared parking, as well as upper story office or residential uses should be encouraged throughout the segment. No development is currently planned for the properties here, although the Frederick property remains attractive for redevelopment.

There is an historic structure at the front of the Frederick property that has been adapted for reuse as retail, office and residential space. It is recommended that this structure be protected. Several modified accessory buildings are located at the rear of the property. These structures may be redeveloped, provided the new development maximizes parking, provides an attractive view for the residences on Owls Nest Road, compliments the existing topography, and supports the historic structure in front.

The Frederick property should provide an appropriate mix of uses and make a strong architectural statement. In addition to retail and office uses, a residential component could add to the life and vitality of the village. Additional residents within the village core would enhance the pedestrian environment and support the local businesses on a daily basis.

3.3.5 Segment Five: Northeast

(Eastern side of Kennett Pike: 5801 - 5811; and, 5 Twadell Mill Road)

This sector is predominantly office uses at the northernmost end, with a limited number of retail uses closer to Twadell Mill Road. The small, brick area off the sidewalk (just north of Lumber Industries) could become a delightful pocket park, providing a bit of respite to the pedestrian.

Upper stories should be residential or office where possible. Additional retail uses should be encouraged on the ground floor. Shared parking and on-street parking should be utilized to allow for the conversion of existing

office space to retail and restaurant uses. A small-business- friendly approach is needed to realize this objective.

At the southern end of the segment, there are two residential structures currently being combined along the northern side of Twaddell Mill Road that should be preserved for their architectural value and historic relationship to the village. They are currently under renovation for residential use, but may appropriately be adapted for mixed-use in the future. These properties could benefit from shared access and parking with the commercial entities fronting on the Kennett Pike. These structures are located close to the road and are adjacent to commercial uses, thus distinguishing them from large-lot residential properties located further east on Twaddell Mill Road.

3.3.6 Segment Six: Southeast

(Eastern side of Kennett Pike: 5701 - 5727; 52 Twadell Mill Road; and, 15 Center Meeting Road)

This segment runs along the eastern side of Kennett Pike between Twaddell Mill Road and Center Meeting Road. Canby Grove Park, located at the northernmost extreme, is owned by the City of Wilmington and leased to the Centreville Civic Association. Future use and improvements within the park are being discussed by those two entities. It is recommended that a more formal entryway be designed at the Twaddell Mill entrance to the park, perhaps including a bus shelter and attractive enclosures for utility service and trash containers, as shown on the Core Opportunities Map. This will serve to invite pedestrians into the park and to delineate that boundary as well.

It is further recommended that the park remain as open space as it serves a vital role in the Village today.

To the east of Canby Grove Park, just outside the Overlay District, is a large tract of land dedicated to open space (Sharp property).

The Odd Fellows Lodge, the adjacent duplex and the larger tract to the south (currently developed with a small, single-family home) are currently zoned residential but have the potential for mixed use in the future. The first floor of the Odd Fellows Lodge has historically been used for retail

purposes and such use is grandfathered in this location. The upper stories have been community meeting spaces, but would also be appropriate for residential and/or office uses.

These three properties should be site planned together, utilizing shared access and shared parking to the rear of the properties. The land to the east, currently zoned residential but used for office and retail purposes, should be brought into compliance and could also be incorporated into this mixed-use area. The Odd Fellows Lodge and adjacent duplex have historic value and should be protected. Any new construction should be architecturally compatible with these structures.

The southernmost property in this sector is also residentially zoned and used. This large property has historic value and should be protected permanently. A preservation easement should be pursued with the property owner. Any preservation mechanism should not preclude appropriate adaptive reuse of the residence or outbuildings. Infill may also be possible if sensitive to the historic structures and setting.

3.3.7 Segment Seven: Residential South

(Eastside of Kennett Pike: 5620 - 5632; and Eastside of Kennett Pike: 5625)

Segment seven is that area on the eastern side of Kennett Pike, south of Center Meeting Road; and the western side of Kennett Pike, beginning at the Carpenter- Lippincott House and running north to, but not including, 5700 Kennett Pike. This segment is currently residential and should remain so. The property on the eastern side is subject to a permanent conservation easement. This large tract of open space helps to delineate the edge of the village, as does the Oberod parcel to the north.

The western side of Segment Seven is developed with several, new single-family homes and the historic Carpenter-Lippincott house. These properties are deed-restricted to limit use of the properties to residential purposes.