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Morris v. Granbury Twp. 1-Oct.-1984  
(Granbury)

Memo regarding suitability of  
Freedman Tract - 100 ± acres,  
Lots 36 and 23, Twp. of Granbury Taxmap,  
for high density mixed-income  
housing. ⊕ cover letter

pgs = 8

ML 0008412

LAW OFFICES

ML000841D

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October 1, 1984

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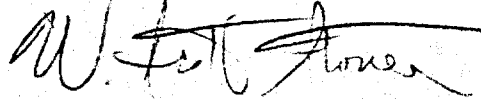
Re: Morris v. Cranbury Township

Dear Mr. Payne:

Per Mr. Philip Caton's instructions, enclosed please find copy of the Michael D. Wilburn's memorandum with reference to the Morris Brothers' proposed site development in Cranbury Township.

Very truly yours,

MCCARTHY AND SCHATZMAN, P.A.



By: W. Scott Stoner

WSS/lb  
Enclosure

MICHAEL D. WILBURN ASSOCIATES  
91 BEAR BROOK ROAD  
PRINCETON, N.J. 08540

September 20, 1984

Philip B. Caton, AICP  
Clarke & Caton  
342 W. State Street  
Trenton, N.J. 08618

Mr. George Raymond  
Raymond, Parish, Pine and Weiner, Inc.  
621 Alexander Road  
Princeton, N.J. 08540

Ms. Georgea von Lutchen, Secretary  
Cranbury Township Planning Board  
Cranbury Township Municipal Offices  
234 North Main Street  
Cranbury, N.J. 08512

Re: Docket No. C-4122-73  
Cranbury, N.J.  
Freedman Tract - 100± Acres  
Lots 36 and 23, Township of Cranbury Tax Map

Gentlemen and Ms. von Lutcken:

This memorandum is delivered to you in accordance with a memorandum from Philip B. Caton dated September 11, 1984 regarding the above noted property and its suitability for higher density mixed-income housing. In this memorandum I intend to follow a format suggested by Mr. Caton in the memorandum of September 11, 1984.

1. SITE SUITABILITY:

The property represents a natural extension of the existing development in the Cranbury Town Center with single-family development immediately adjacent to the northern property boundary. The property is readily accessible with frontage on both Hightstown Road and Route #130. Route 130 will provide ready access for residents of the community to employment and retail business services to the north and south of the property, thereby minimizing the impact upon local roads. In short, the site appears to be the

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1. SITE SUITABILITY:

The property represents a natural extension of the existing development in the Cranbury Town Center with single-family development immediately adjacent to the northern property boundary. The property is readily accessible with frontage on both Hightstown Road and Route #130. Route 130 will provide ready access for residents of the community to employment and retail business services to the north and south of the property, thereby minimizing the impact upon local roads. In short, the site appears to be the

most natural extension of existing development in Cranbury and by virtue of its frontage on Route #130, one which will minimize traffic impact upon the local community

(a) ACCESSIBILITY:

Accessibility within the area is afforded by frontage on both Hightstown Road and Route #130. Route #130 is the major north-south transportation corridor in the Township and provides ready access to the employment centers to the north as well as to retail and service centers both to the north and to the south. This frontage on Route #130 is expected to have the effect of minimizing traffic on other local roads except for that limited portion of traffic by residents having a business in the immediate vicinity. The site is well located by virtue of its Route #130 and Hightstown Road frontage to be served by any future public transportation.

(b) PROXIMITY TO GOODS AND SERVICES:

The site is immediately adjacent to the existing Cranbury Town Center development and thereby within convenient distance of those goods and services located therein. This includes food, and other retail goods, as well as fire protection, elementary school, and related services.

(c) UTILITIES:

A sewer line is virtually at the property on Hightstown Road, and the site's proximity to the existing development in Cranbury suggests that it could be conveniently tied in to the existing water system, although perhaps additional well capacity will be required.

(d) ENVIRONMENTAL SUITABILITY:

The site is well suited for development, being essentially flat and lacking foliage or other environmental characteristics which would warrant preservation. The off-site impact of the intended development will be limited by virtue of its frontage on Route #130 and Hightstown Road and the existing single family development along the northern edge of the property. Buffers in open space will be provided around the property as well as through it.

(e) COMPATIBILITY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

The proposed development has been formulated to represent a compatible and natural extension of the existing development in the Cranbury Town Center immediately to the north. Three housing types are contemplated, with the lowest density, zero lot line single housing to be placed on the property immediately adjacent to the single family development to the north and running for approximately 44 acres to the southern end of the property. At that point, the development would transition to townhouses and finally into multi-family development in three-story apartments for sale or rental at the southern end of the property. This configuration would place most of the higher density away from the existing Cranbury Town Center and close to the access road out onto Route #130. The number of apartment units would be

limited to 130, all of which would be Mount Laurel Units, with 65 low-income and 65 moderate income. The balance of the community would be in lower densities, with the lowest density, single-family units, adjacent to the existing Cranbury Town Center development. The proposed project is consistent with existing local, county and state Land Use policies, and represents a relatively straightforward, although well-balanced and well-conceived, community development.

(f) OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

The site is unusual among the sites being considered for rezoning as part of the Mount Laurel settlement in that it is immediately contiguous to existing development in the Cranbury Town Center and is serviced by utilities close to or at the site and frontage on Route #130 which will minimize traffic on the community. It is, in our judgment, the most natural site for the densities and type of community proposed as part of the Township's resolution of its Mount Laurel obligation.

2. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL:

The site includes 100 acres, of which 25 acres is proposed to remain in dedicated common open space and major collector roadways. Major collector roadways are expected to take up approximately two to three percent of the site, leaving over twenty percent of the site in dedicated common open space. The remaining seventy-five acres would be allocated as follows: 240 zero-lot line homes at 5.5 units per acre encompassing 44 acres; 210 townhouses at 10.0 units per acre encompassing twenty-one acres; and two hundred three-story apartment units at twenty units per acre, encompassing ten acres. The densities indicated for the housing types would include local streets and roads and are expressed in the typical net density bases, excluding common open space, and collector roads.

The Mount Laurel units would be provided in the form of 130 three-story apartment units, either for sale or rental to be determined subsequently, at a density of twenty units per acre. This is the density which has been shown to be economical in minimizing land improvements related to Mount Laurel housing and also in conserving as much of the remaining site as possible for lower density uses and for open spaces. Given the relatively small size of the apartment component as a proportion of the total community, it represents a very sound density proposal.

The economics of providing Mount Laurel housing require that all of the units be apartment units in three-story buildings in order to provide a unit at the most economical sales or rental basis within the guidelines set forward under the Mount Laurel regulations. Although all of the Mount Laurel units would be included in the apartment component, they would be built on a pro rata basis in time with other portions of the community. All of the units would be clustered into one area, however, in order to provide a cohesive apartment community for these residents.

The Mount Laurel component would thus include 130 out of a total of 650 units, representing 20% of the total, which is the typical Mount Laurel proportion. Sixty-five units would be for lower-income families and 65 units would be for moderate-income families.

A conceptual plan indicating the general location of housing types and illustrative distribution of open space as well as preliminary collector roadway system to the property will be presented at the Planning Board meeting next week.

### 3. ECONOMIC DOCUMENTATION:

It is well established within the context of Mount Laurel housing settlements throughout New Jersey that a density of approximately six units per acre is at the low end of that density required to economically support development of twenty percent of the total community in Mount Laurel housing. Such a density is at the low end of overall multi-family densities and also low enough to permit mixing of housing types in order to get a diverse community and to afford an adequate amount of common open space.

Our evaluation of the market indicates that the best approach to the development of this property is to attempt to balance the Mount Laurel housing with as much lower density product as possible in order to present a community compatible with the existing development in Cranbury Township and one which is a natural extension of the existing Town Center development. Accordingly, the great bulk of acreage, 44 acres out of a total net developable of 75 acres, will be in detached zero lot line single-family housing, with the remaining 31 acres in townhouse and apartment development. The overall impression of the community will be of a relatively low density environment dominated by a single-family street scene, with transition through the townhouses to a limited component of higher density development.

At 6½ units per acre, the mix of housing types proposed is considered essential in order to create sufficient land value in the lower density product types to offset the very heavy subsidies required to produce Mount Laurel housing. The Mount Laurel housing component will be separately financed and constructed in order to take full advantage of all possible economic and financial measures to support its development.

Our evaluation of the market indicates that the conventional market units could be readily absorbed within a three to four year sales period upon commencing development.

We would additionally be willing to provide a small commercial area if the Township so desires. We suggest a convenience type shopping area of four to six acres.

4. LAND USE REGULATIONS:

We have not conducted an exhaustive analysis of modifications in Cranbury's zoning ordinance which would be required to accommodate this community and remove necessary exactions and cost-generative provisions which inflat the cost of producing housing in the Township.

It is clear, however, that a proper zone would be required to accommodate the housing types called for at the densities proposed. These densities are in line with typical densities permitted by various township where they have recognized these housing types, and each net density is reasonable in relation to the housing type. The necessary bulk and use regulations would have to be established to accommodate this housing. For example, the zero lot line lot itself be on a lot which could be a minimum of 45 foot frontage with less frontage on cul-de-sacs, and a minimum depth of 100 feet. One side wall of the unit would be on the lot line, with only one side yard offered. It would be important throughout the community to assure that cartwaywidth of the road are not excessive. Typically, for single-family developments in the zero lot line category and for townhouse communities a cartway in the 24 ft. - 28 ft. inch range is adequate. With respect to the Mount Laurel apartment units, it would be important to recognize the necessity of larger buildings in order to provide them economically and a total of up to 24 units should be permitted in each building. Distances between buildings should be reasonable, particularly where the distance measured is the relationship of the corner of two buildings and not end walls and side walls, having a wall-to-wall relationship. A corner to corner building distance of thirty feet should be considered with a wall-to-wall distance between buildings of fifty feet considered adequate.

We would expect to submit more detailed bulk and use regulations relating to the zones which would be required for the housing types proposed upon receiving encouragement from the Township that they would like to proceed further in order to enact the necessary modifications in the zoning ordinance.

We further expect the elimination of the TDR requirement. We have assumed throughout that the TDR requirement will no longer be applicable.

\* \* \* \* \*

In summary, we believe that the development plan proposed for the Morris property will result in a well-balanced community offering a variety of housing types, at reasonable densities, with an attractive provision for a dedicated common open space. The community will provide a natural extension of the existing development of the Cranbury Town Center, with almost half of the property taken up in lower density single-family detached zero lot line units, and transitioning through townhouses to a limited component of apartments within which would be provided the 120 Mount Laurel units representing the sites and contribution to the regional Mount Laurel need housing. The site enjoys excellent accessibility, fronting on two major roads, and its frontage on Route #130 would minimize the traffic impact of



September 20, 1984

residents of the community upon the existing Town Center of Cranbury and other local roads of the community while providing ready access of the residents to public goods and services to the north and south along Route #130.

We believe the site represents the most natural extension of the existing development of the Cranbury Town Center and should be positioned foremost among those considered for medium density zoning in order to accommodate the Township's Mount Laurel obligations.

We believe that the proposed density and the way that it would be utilized in the variety of housing types contemplated in the net densities set forth, together with the provision for common open space, would represent a very attractive community and one which would be compatible with the interest of preserving and enhancing the existing character of Cranbury Township. We do not believe a higher density is in order, nor do we believe that it would be compatible and desirable from the point of view of representing a natural extension of the existing development of the Cranbury Town Center. Similarly, a lower density would make it very difficult to provide economically the Mount Laurel housing contemplated. In short, we believe that our proposal strikes the appropriate balance in density and the way in which it would be utilized to create a quality community of property.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. We are prepared to present a conceptual plan illustrating the points made in this letter to the Planning Board at the public meeting on September 26.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Wilburn  
Planning Consultant for  
Joseph D. Morris and  
Robert Morris