

NORTHWEST QUADRANT DESIGN STUDY

PHASE TWO: DESIGN PLAN PROPOSALS
A REPORT OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepared by the Pennington Borough Planning Board
Pennington, New Jersey

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INTRODUCTION

Area Description

The Northwest Quadrant of the Borough of Pennington may be generally described as that area located to the north of West Delaware Avenue and to the west of North Main Street. For the purposes of this study, however, the properties on both sides of West Delaware Avenue and North Main Street, as well as the main business district area of the Borough, have been included.

The Northwest Quadrant contains a mixture of residential, business, office, industrial, public, agricultural, and vacant land parcels. Existing land uses include the Pennington School, Borough offices, land fill, fire and rescue squads, the railroad station, the central business district, a highway shopping area, and the large industrial building complex on West Franklin Avenue.

The significance of the uses, their particular location, plus the existence of undeveloped land areas, have made the future development of the Northwest Quadrant a major concern of the Planning Board. In the 1965 Borough Master Plan much of the Northwest Quadrant east of the railroad was designated for future high density residential development, and a special design study for a portion of this area was prepared.

Purpose of Study

The Master Plan for the Borough is now over ten years old and the Planning Board felt it was time to re-examine the proposals for the Northwest Quadrant with respect to the changes that have taken place within the community and the region over the years. In addition, the planning for a regional sewer system may soon be realized and make the construction of multi-family housing, and other Northwest Quadrant development, possible.

The Planning Board feels that the importance of this area to the orderly, balanced growth of the Borough has not diminished over time and an examination in some depth is in order. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to prepare a detailed design plan to guide the future development of the Northwest Quadrant.

Study Method and Status

The design study was divided into three phases:

- Phase 1: Analysis and Concept Design
- Phase 2: Design Plan Proposals
- Phase 3: Implementation

Phase one was completed in September, 1975. This phase included an updating of the Borough base map and the 1964 existing land use map for the entire Borough; an inventory of existing features in the Northwest Quadrant; an analysis of the opportunities and constraints found in the study area; proposals for alternative design plans, and suggestions for implementing such proposals; and a brief study of other large parcels of vacant land in the Borough.

Phase two is completed with the submission of this report. This report describes the design plan proposals and is prepared in a form suitable to serve as an amendment to the Borough Master Plan.

Phase three has also been completed and a separate report has been prepared and submitted to the Planning Board by its Planning Consultant.

DESIGN PLAN PROPOSALS

Background

As part of the Phase One study, three alternative design plans were developed and discussed at length by the Planning Board at workshop sessions. These alternatives had as their basis the 1965 Borough Master Plan and Master Plan Design Study for the Northwest Quadrant, and the findings of the Phase One design analysis. From the three alternatives a recommended design plan was developed in concept form. This recommended plan was presented by the Planning Board at meetings with several local organizations and was discussed at public meetings of the Planning Board. The public comments on the recommended concept plan resulting from these meetings were recorded and considered in the development of the detailed design plan.

Plan Concept

The proposed detailed design plan is then a further modification of the recommended concept plan from Phase One. Plan proposals are illustrated in concept form on the attached map. A large scale map of the detailed design plan is available at Borough Hall.

The purpose of the plan is to guide future development, not to induce it. Therefore, the plan has no target date for completion, but anticipates full development. As development does in fact take place, modifications of the detailed design plan may be necessary, and the concepts and objectives forming the plan should provide the necessary direction for such changes.

These plan concepts and objectives include:

1. Preservation of the Borough's visual character, as defined in the 1965 Design Study (see page 7);
2. Enhancement of business development and mixed uses in the center to maintain its role as the community center;
3. Interconnection of all development areas with a pedestrian network to reduce local vehicular travel;
4. Provision of new roadways to provide needed linkages;
5. Provision of needed multi-family units in areas appropriate for that use and compatible with adjacent development;
6. Replacement of the present industrial use area with areas appropriate for the development of office uses; and
7. Allocation of existing and new open spaces areas to enhance future development, meet existing and future needs, and preserve community character.

Plan Elements

The following description of plan proposals is organized in accordance with the seven plan elements required* for inclusion in any Master Plan preparation or amendment.

1. Land Use Plan Element

The Detailed Design Plan map illustrates the existing and proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for residential, business, office, office-residence, public and semi-public, and open space uses.

Residential

The plan provides for single-family development, townhouses, and apartments. A total of 250 dwelling units may be accommodated in the plan. This includes 212 multi-family units at gross densities of up to 8 units per acre. The distribution of the unit types, projected population, and other factors, is discussed under the Housing Plan Element. The smaller apartment-type units are located adjacent to the business area (100 units) and the family oriented townhouse units (112 units) are further removed, but still within walking distance of the Borough center.

Business

Retail business expansion (for new construction) is limited to approximately 15,000 square feet of gross floor area to serve the needs of new residents. Additional expansion is possible in areas previously designated for retail business use, but presently in residential use. The new construction is proposed in the area to the rear of the Borough Hall. The existing parking area would be expanded to over 100 spaces and would provide a multi-use facility for the Grange, Borough Hall and Library, and the shops.

No changes in the existing highway business area is proposed. This area is fully developed (although minor expansions are possible) and is located on the easterly side of Route 31, from Broemel Place south to the Township boundary. Expansion of highway business in strip fashion along Route 31 is not needed to meet the needs of the community or the area and would not be compatible with community character.

*Municipal Land Use Law, Chapter 291, Laws of New Jersey, 1975.

The designation of retail service has been eliminated as a separate use category and combined with retail business use. The separation of these business uses in specific areas has not proven to be useful or necessary to the present or proposed plan.

Office

Office use is proposed to replace the primary employment area now designated as restricted industrial. The restricted industrial area was centered on the former Cointreau property, but no demand for manufacturing use areas has materialized. The office use area is proposed for portions of the Route 31 frontage and the former Cointreau property.

The proposed office area would provide ground floor space for about 66,000 square feet of new construction housing, at 200 square feet per office, worker, approximately 330 new employees. The existing Cointreau buildings and grounds could accommodate at least 100 additional employees.

Office-Residence

The office-residence use category is designed to provide professional office space in a portion of a residential structure. In the proposed plan this use category has been reduced in scope to that area immediately adjacent to the Borough center. The plan also proposes that no exterior change in the residential character of office-residence uses be permitted. Concentration of this use category around the center will take advantage of the expanded off-street parking areas and will enhance the character of the center.

Public and Semi-Public

Public and semi-public uses include Borough Hall and Library, Fire and First Aid Stations, Post Office, Grange, Railroad Station, Churches and Cemeteries. All of these uses are existing and no new public or semi-public uses are proposed in the plan.

The Railroad Station (1882) has recently been added to the State and National registers of Historic Places and is proposed in the plan for use as a railroad museum.

The present School Administration building is indicated on the plan. Should this building be vacated in the future the site could be developed for townhouses. Alternatively the building could continue in use for public purposes. Should the proposal for a joint Township-Borough library to be located in the Borough be realized, this site would be appropriate. The use could be shared with Borough offices and the present Borough Hall sold for commercial use.

Open Space

The location and use of open spaces are key elements in the Detailed Design Plan. Open space areas will be required of all new development and its location and use will be governed by the plan. Most open spaces are small in size, but most are linked to other open spaces to maintain a continuous feeling of openness. This effect is important in the preservation of community scale and character.

2. Housing Plan Element

The Detailed Design Plan map indicates the location and type of housing proposed for the Northwest Quadrant. Approximately 250 new units could be accommodated by the plan. The proposed distribution of housing type, as indicated below, would provide the mixture necessary to maintain the present socio-economic mix of the community.

<u>Unit Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Persons/Unit</u>	<u>Population</u>
Townhouses	112	3.0	336
Single-Family	38	3.3	125
Apartments	50	2.5	125
Pennington School Apts.	30	2.0	60
Apts. over shops	20	1.8	36
Totals:	250		682 persons

The proposed townhouse, or single-family attached units, would be located in three areas and designed for owner occupancy by small families. The new single-family detached units are further removed from the Borough center and are proposed as cluster developments at a gross density of two per acre. Three types of apartment units are proposed, all designed for renter occupancy by individuals, couples and very small families. These include 50 units of two-story garden apartments, 30 units of apartments located on Pennington School property and developed for school purposes, and 20 units above the new shops proposed in the center.

No specific areas have been designated for low or moderate income housing. The apartment development area would be most appropriate for senior citizen housing, subsidized or unsubsidized.

Most of the land available for residential development outside of the Northwest Quadrant is located in the R-100 zone (2 plus or minus units per gross acre). Approximately 160 units could be developed on the vacant land in that zone. This includes the Abey Tract, now being developed. By adding these areas to the Northwest Quadrant, the full development capacity of the Borough can be determined.

Northwest Quadrant:	250 units	682 persons
Rest of Borough:	160 units (at 3.0)	480
Existing units (1975):	720	<u>2,215</u>
		3,377 persons.

The 410 total new units for the entire Borough at full development is slightly less than the 433 projected by the 1965 Master Plan. In the 1970 Census, 150 of 704 units or 21.3 percent were renter occupied. Assuming that of the 410 projected new units to full development, 100 units would be renter occupied and the remainder owner occupied, the renter occupancy percentage of the total 1,130 units, would be 22.1 percent.

3. Circulation Plan Element

A major emphasis in the Detailed Design Plan is the proposed walkway system radiating out from the Borough center to all new development areas. The walkway system is concentrated in the center where most pedestrian activity will take place.

Approximately 3,000 lineal feet of new road construction is proposed in the plan. These roadways will provide needed road linkages for both present and projected needs. These include connections between Broemel Place and West Delaware (roadbed exists), and extending between Broemel and West Franklin; an extension of Knowles Street south to Broemel; and an extension of Broemel into the center development area. With the exception of the connection between West Delaware and Broemel which would be improved by the Borough, all new road linkages would be constructed as part of private development.

The increased road network will accommodate increased traffic by providing a means of distributing loads to alternate networks. For example, the center development area will be linked to Broemel providing a direct connection out to Route 31 without encouraging through traffic to North Main Street. Fire and safety access will also be improved with the increased road network.

The Plan anticipates the eventual dualization of Route 31 and the need for a traffic signal at Route 31 and Broemel Place. Jug handle turning movements may be required on Route 31 at West Delaware and Broemel Place and provision for such movements has been included in the plan.

Off-street parking areas are proposed for all new development. Residential, highway business and office building parking is provided on each site, subject to zoning standards and site plan review. Public parking in the center for shopper use is proposed in three areas. The location and design of these parking areas is important to the success of the design plan proposals for this area. A total of approximately 350 spaces are indicated. These spaces may be provided by new and existing development, by the Borough, or by a combination of both.

4. Utility Service Plan Element

The lack of sanitary sewer facilities has been a constraint to new development in the Borough. The regional sewer plant designed to serve Pennington is now under construction in Princeton and is scheduled for completion by November, 1977. Service to Pennington will require the construction of a trunk line from the regional plant to the Borough and the construction of a local collector system. For the purposes of this plan it is assumed that these facilities will be in use by 1980. The regional plant was sized to accommodate a Borough population of 3,600 at full development. The Borough collector system has been designed to service every property and will have the capacity to accommodate the plan.

The existing ground water supply in the Pennington area is limited and will continue to be a constraint to development for the immediate future. The installation of sewers is expected to increase existing water use and new development may require the importation of water.

At present the Borough uses between 178,000 and 208,000 gpd (193,000 gpd average over last six months). Present household daily average is 54 gallons per capita (62 gpd total use). Full development of the Borough, assuming an average use of 100 gpd per person, would require 337,700 gpd. The State at present permits the withdrawal of 250,000 gpd. If additional ground water supplies are found, and the State increases the present withdrawal allowance, new development would not require the importation of water.

All new development will be reviewed, as part of site plan review, for storm water drainage control provisions. Necessary measures such as larger culverts and retention basins can be made part of development requirements.

5. Community Facilities Plan Element

Public and Semi-Public uses are discussed under the Land Use Plan Element. All existing uses are shown on the plan and no new facilities are proposed, although alternatives are examined.

A major area for continued plan review and consideration is the Borough Land Fill. The land fill will be complete in a few years. It is anticipated that this site will continue to house Borough maintenance vehicles for the foreseeable future. The plan indicates this site as appropriate for park or residential use, or a combination of both. The cost of building over land fill may preclude many types of development, and therefore specific design proposals for the site are not shown.

6. Recreation Plan Element

Open space uses are discussed under the Land Use Plan Element. Most of the open spaces proposed in the plan are small in size and not intended for active recreational use. New residential development will be required to provide on-site recreational facilities, in accordance with project needs. No public active recreational facilities are proposed in the plan.

The area owned by the Pennington School, and bounded by West Delaware, the Railroad, Broemel Place, and Green Avenue, is proposed as additional recreation area for the Pennington School. This site would not be desirable for additional academic buildings, and an open space use would maintain the present attractive entrance to the Borough center.

7. Conservation Plan Element

The first of the seven plan objectives is the preservation of the Borough's visual character, as defined in the 1965 Design Study. The two primary elements defining the Borough's visual character are its architecture, in terms of its harmonious scale, use of materials and design, and its landscaping, in terms of its generous plantings and tree-lined streets.

Preparation of the Detailed Design Plan was guided by the need to preserve existing visual character. The plan proposes the preservation of wooded areas, additional plantings as recommended in the 1965 study, and the arrangement, massing, use of materials, and design of new buildings to be compatible with the arrangement, massing, use of materials, and design of existing buildings.

DESIGN PLAN RELATIONSHIP TO TOWNSHIP AND COUNTY

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law requires that the Design Plan include a specific policy statement indicating the relationship of proposed development to the plans of contiguous municipalities and the County.

The Hopewell Township Master Plan is presently being revised by the Township Planning Board. During preparation of the Design Plan informal discussions on Northwest Quadrant land use proposals were held with the Township Planning Board regarding potential land use conflicts along Route 31 between Township and Borough. It is the understanding of the Borough Planning Board that any land use conflicts in this area will be resolved with the completion of a revised Township Master Plan.

The various elements of the County Master Plan, as they relate to Pennington and the immediate area, have been reviewed during preparation of the Design Plan. The Design Plan proposals are found to be in conformance with those of the Mercer County Master Plan.

DESIGN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Three steps are necessary to implement the proposals of the Detailed Design Plan:

1. Adoption by the Planning Board, after public hearing, of the Northwest Quadrant plan proposals as an amendment to the present Borough Master Plan;
2. Enactment, by Borough Council, of revisions to the Borough Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board to conform to the new Land Use Law and to the proposals of the Design Plan;
3. Enactment, by Borough Council, of a Site Plan Review Ordinance providing for Planning Board review of new construction. (Ordinance adopted September 7, 1976.)

The Phase Three report, Implementation, has been completed and submitted to the Planning Board. This report recommends specific revisions to the Borough Zoning Ordinance to comply with the new Land Use Law and to implement the Design Plan.

These revisions include proposed changes in zoning regulations and the zoning map to conform to the plan proposals. The proposed revisions should be reviewed now but not submitted to the Borough Council until the Design Plan is adopted by the Planning Board as an amendment to the present Master Plan.

Major proposed zoning ordinance changes include:

1. All uses required to conform to Design Plan;
2. Zone Map changes to conform to Design Plan:
 - Elimination of M-R (Industrial) zone.
 - B-S zone changed to B-R.
 - Addition of O-B (Office Building) zone.
3. Changes in R-A (Apartment-Townhouse) zone to conform to Design Plan;
4. Addition of R-100 cluster development regulations;
5. Special Exception uses made Conditional Uses;
6. Complete revision of Board of Adjustment procedures to comply with Land Use Law; and
7. Other procedural changes required by Land Use Law.

