

**CITY OF WILDWOOD  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION REPORT for HISTORIC REGISTRY  
April 20, 2005 (revised)**

Petition No.: H.R. 1-05  
 Petitioner: Property Owners of Westland Acres (Westland Acres Partnership, Union Baptist Church, and Heirs of George and Ida Walsh Family Real Estates Company, L.L.C.)  
 Request: Add the Community of Westland Acres to the City's Historical Registry  
 Location: Both sides of Church Road, west of Strecker Road  
 Tract Size: Approximately 67 acres  
 Locator No.: Multiple Properties (see Attachment B)  
 Public Hearing  
 Date: January 27, 2005  
 Report: Attachment A  
 Properties Plan: Attachment B  
 Concept Plan; Attachment C  
 Background  
 Information, including  
 photographs: Attachment D  
 Initial Vote on Registry: 4 to 0 for approval (Long, Barth, Rosener, and Martin)  
 Date of Vote: March 16, 2005  
 Final Vote: 5 to 0 for approval (Martin, Rosener, Long, Downs, and Antonacci)  
 Date of Vote: April 20, 2005  
 School District: Rockwood  
 Fire District: Monarch  
 Ward: Two

**Background of the Westland Acres Area:**

The community of Westland Acres can be traced to the years around 1868, when the African Baptist Church was established on an acre of ground in far western St. Louis County. Both the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation and the City of Wildwood's Historic Preservation Commission have catalogued this area; the latter when it discussed and approved the establishment of the 5<sup>th</sup> Land Use Category of the Master Plan. The creation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Land Use Category was intended to provide a mechanism within the City's Master Plan to encourage the protection, preservation, and reuse of historic properties in this community. For the purposes of the Master Plan and the Historic Preservation Ordinance, properties included individual structures, buildings, parcels of ground, and areas, such as the subject community. Five (5) areas of the City were identified by the Historic Preservation Commission as part of this process that would be 'most suitable' for this designation and they included Melrose, Glencoe, Centaur, Orrville, and Westland Acres. The significance of this community has been documented in many forms, one (1) such consideration is the continuous ownership of property by descendents of its original founders (see attached report prepared by the petitioner).

The Westland Acres Community has long been an area of importance due to its singularly interesting history associated not only with its creation, but the continuous timeframe the

descendants have owned or lived in the area. Over the past ten (10) years, the City of Chesterfield, the City of Wildwood, and St. Louis County, through its Community Development Office, have discussed many proposals for the development of this area. In these discussions, efforts were made to create a situation that would allow the property owners and residents to participate in the development of the area, but retain a certain level of residency in the area. Although no immediate solution was achieved, the discussions continued, which led to the next proposal for this area.

This next proposal was a request submitted to the City of Wildwood for the area of Westland Acres to be transferred to the City of Chesterfield via a de-annexation petition. This request was submitted with the intent to create a single entity for the consideration of the area's future development, which was to be a new residential subdivision. The City of Wildwood began the review of the information that would allow for such a consideration, along with contacting the City of Chesterfield, but little progress was made on the proposal due to certain requests for information not being addressed to the extent needed. After repeated efforts by the City to obtain information relating to this de-annexation proposal, the request was not pursued and it was recently removed from the Planning/Economic Development/Parks Committee's agenda, which eliminated any further consideration of it.

This withdrawal was followed by the submittal of the proposal by a majority of property owners to the City of Wildwood's Historic Preservation Commission to include the Wildwood portion of the Westland Acres community onto its Historic Registry. This request, if approved, would allow the property owners/development interests to request the application of the 5<sup>th</sup> Land Use Category for the area. With the 5<sup>th</sup> Land Use Category, potential development options could be increased in terms of its future use. Whereas, earlier proposals for the development of this community did not include a preservation component, that circumstance has now changed. This change is reflected in the plan presented at the public hearing by the petitioners' representative, which indicated a proposed design concept for this area's development this plan included individual lots for single family dwellings, areas of common ground for certain site amenities, and a historic preservation component.

#### **Criteria for Nominations to the City's Historic Registry:**

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance establishes thirteen (13) items that are to be utilized in determining the appropriateness of the nomination relative to the criteria established by the United States Department of Interior's National Park Service. Only one (1) of these thirteen (13) items must be met for favorable consideration of a requested nomination to the registry. In the case of the Westland Acres Community, specifically Items # 1, 4, 5, 10, 12, and 13 meet this required compliance:

1. *Its character, interest or value is part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the community, County, State or country;*
2. Its overall setting is part of a collection of buildings, structures or objects where the overall collection forms a unit;
3. It has the potential to be returned to an accurate historic appearance regardless of alterations or insensitive treatment that can be demonstrated to be reversible;
4. *Its location is the site of a significant local, County, State or national event;*
5. *It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, County, State or country;*
6. It embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type valuable for the study of period, type, method of construction or use of indigenous materials;

7. It is identified as the work of a master builder, designer, architect or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, State or country;
8. It embodies design, detailing, materials or craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant;
9. It embodies design that makes it structurally or architecturally innovative;
10. *It has a unique location or singular physical characteristic that makes it an established or familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City;*
11. Its character is a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure including, but not limited to, farmhouses, gas stations, or other commercial structures, with a high level of integrity or architectural significance;
12. *It is suitable for preservation or restoration; and*
13. *It has potential to yield information important to history or prehistory.*

In considering these criteria, the Historic Preservation Commission agrees the property is appropriate for consideration to the City's Historic Registry for a number of reasons. These reasons include the following:

1. The requirements of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance can be met by this request;
2. The preservation of this area will guarantee that Westland Acres' name and history are preserved and provide a mechanism for the City to create a partnership for its long-term protection of certain assets of the site;
3. The approval of this request would increase the number of properties on the City's Registry;
4. The inclusion of this property onto the registry benefits all parties; and
5. The certificate of appropriateness process allows future modifications to certain aspects of the area's characteristics to be managed to the best interest of the descendants and City in terms of its character and commitment.

#### **Areas for Certificate of Appropriateness:**

The Historic Preservation Commission is recommending a tiered level of review be applied according to the relative importance in terms of potential impact on the historic assets or community, if alterations, modifications, or changes are made. The tiering would allow for active participation in use/development decisions relating to the church/cemetery, historic improvements (cabin, artworks, benches, signage, entry improvements), and other subdivision and infrastructure items (as set forth in any site-specific ordinance). Existing and any new single family dwellings would not be subject to review, as a function of the placement of this area on the City's Historic Registry.

This review process related to the Certificate of Appropriateness would be limited to exterior modifications and alterations of those items identified above. No interior review requirements would be established. Alterations requiring a certificate of appropriateness include:

1. Any construction, alteration or removal requiring a building or grading permit from the City;
2. Any demolition, in whole or part, requiring a permit from the City;
3. Any construction, alteration, demolition or removal affecting a significant exterior architectural feature or appearance, as specified in the ordinance designating the historic area's specified list of review items; and

4. Any construction, alteration or removal involving earth-disturbing activities that might affect archeological resources.

**Specific Items Initiating Review:**

- ✓ Roof repairs or replacements to the church and cabin
- ✓ Painting of the exterior of the church, cabin, benches, and signage and site improvements
- ✓ Repair or replacement of exterior fascia boards on church and cabin
- ✓ Installation or removal of windows on church and cabin
- ✓ Repair or replacement of doors on church and cabin
- ✓ Structural modifications to any of the church, cabin, and subdivision type improvements
- ✓ Additions or modifications of a non-structural nature, such as replacement or repair of gutters, downspouts, trim boards, or other key architectural elements of the exterior on the church and cabin
- ✓ Site modifications governed by any future site-specific ordinance including, but not limited to, grading within the vicinity of the church, cemetery, cabin, and subdivision improvements and the placement of single family dwellings that might block or impede views associated with these historic assets.

**Design Criteria to be applied to Certificate of Appropriateness Review Process:**

In considering an application for a certificate of appropriateness, the Historic Preservation Commission shall be guided in principal by the Secretary of the Interior's standards as follows:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and exterior spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding non-authentic or architectural features of other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the most gentle means possible.
8. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

9. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired. (Ordinance No. 547 §1, 8-9-99)

#### **Standards for Review Process:**

Design guidelines for applying the criteria for review of certificates of appropriateness shall, at minimum, consider the following architectural criteria:

1. *Height.* The height of any proposed alteration or construction should be compatible with the style and character of the historic property.
2. *Proportions of windows and doors.* The proportions and relationships between doors and windows should be compatible with the architectural style and character of the historic property.
3. *Relationship of building masses and spaces.* The setback and relationship of the historic property to the open space between it and adjoining structures should be compatible.
4. *Roof shape.* The design of the roof should be compatible with the architectural style and character of the historic property.
5. *Landscaping.* Landscaping should be compatible with the architectural character and appeal of the historic properties.
6. *Scale.* The scale of the structure after alteration, construction, or partial demolition should be compatible with its architectural style and character and with surrounding historic properties.
7. *Directional expression.* Facades of historic properties should blend with other structures with regard to directional expression. Historic properties should be compatible with the dominant horizontal or vertical expression of surrounding structures. The directional expression of a historic property after alteration, construction or partial demolition should be compatible with its original architectural style and character.
8. *Architectural details.* Architectural details including materials, colors and textures should be treated so as to make a historic property compatible with its original architectural style and character and to preserve and enhance the architectural style or character of a historic property.
9. *Signage.* The character of signs should be in keeping with the historic architectural character of a historic property. Character of a sign includes the number, size, area, sale, location, type, (e.g., off-site advertising signs and on-site business signs), letter size or style, and intensity and type of illumination.
10. *Minimum maintenance.* Significant exterior architectural features should be kept in a condition of good repair and maintenance. All structural and mechanical systems should be maintained in a condition and state of repair that will prevent decay, deterioration or damage to significant architectural features or otherwise adversely affect the historic property. (Ordinance No. 547 §1, 8-9-99)

#### **Requirements for an Incentive Package:**

Although the Historic Preservation Commission does not have specific recommendations regarding the design concept submitted to it during the public hearing for the development of this area, **it does have an opinion on its potential density, which is described below. Additionally, the Commission also has a lengthy list of other requirements** that should be considered by the City Council, if a proposal of this nature should follow the placement of Westland Acres community onto the historic registry. These requirements would be imposed on the ultimate developer of the Westland Acres Area and reflect its use for a future residential community,

which would appear to be an acceptable proposal and supportable by this Commission. These requirements would include the following:

1. The reconstruction of a period cabin in a future common ground area to complement the church and cemetery already within the registry area. The cabin must be located within close proximity of the church and cemetery to form a linkage between these assets.
2. The installation of artwork in prominent locations within the area where the historic registry area has been designated. The artwork must be appropriate for the purpose it is being required for in this instance, i.e. recognition of the church in the creation of community that transcends generations.
3. The installation of an interpretative walking trail throughout the proposed development, which will provide a living history of Westland Acres.
4. The naming of any future residential subdivision in this area shall include "Westland Acres" in the subdivision's name.
5. The naming of all streets and public places shall correspond to the descendents of the original property owners and founders.
6. The recording of the oral history of the Westland Acres Area and its dissemination to public libraries, historical commissions and societies in both the Cities of Wildwood and Chesterfield, and other interested institutions, such as schools, at no charge.
7. The planning and implementation of a celebration memorializing the Westland Acres community and these historic preservation efforts.
8. **The existing archeological assets of the Westland Acres Area, such as remnants of buildings, structures, or other improvements, must be actively surveyed (in accord with accepted procedures), cataloged, photographed, and preserved, if possible, and incorporated into any new improvement constructed on the site for the purposes of the requirements for a potential incentive package under the auspices of the 5<sup>th</sup> Land Use Category of the Master Plan.**
9. The maintenance, upkeep, and repair of these historic assets shall be the responsibility of the Homeowners Association of any new residential subdivision approved in this area, unless another comparable entity is created to assume these responsibilities. Along with the creation of the appropriate entity to maintain these historic assets, **not including the church property and cemetery**, a reserve fund shall be established by the developer of any new residential subdivision for this oversight authority to accommodate unforeseen costs, which shall not be less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) in total amount. ~~If these assets are not maintained, the City shall have the right to place liens on any or all private properties within the development's boundaries to fund said maintenance.~~ **This condition shall not be required of the developer, if any public entity, such as a City, or a not-for-profit organization would assume ownership, control, or management of these historic assets.**
10. The developer of any future residential subdivision within the Westland Acres Area must provide to an appropriate agency, such as Habitat for Humanity, a sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) to fund the provision of affordable housing in the west St. Louis County Area. This donation shall be given in the name of the Westland Acres community and its residents.
11. **The City of Chesterfield and the City of Wildwood, if a development proposal is submitted under the auspices of the 5<sup>th</sup> Land Use Category within this jurisdiction, shall jointly review this information and act upon it within a framework of a coordinated process, which shall be determined by the respective parties to meet the needs of all parties.**

- 12. The development of these properties at some time in the future should be respective of the surrounding land use pattern, but, in no instance, should allowable density exceed one (1) unit for every acre of ground.**

**Summary and Recommendation:**

The Historic Preservation Commission has determined the subject area complies with the minimum level of items to be considered for acceptance onto the City's Historic Registry and, with its addition, will allow for the historic community to be permanently retained by naming activities relating to any future development and the preservation of the church and cemetery. Along with these efforts, other potential requirements that should be considered by the City Council for inclusion as part of any future use of this area for residential purposes would be the installation of walking trails, benches, artwork, and entry monuments (into this future development) that represents and respects the history of this area and portrays it accordingly. Additionally, the Commission is also supporting the donation of money to an area organization to support the provision of affordable housing in west St. Louis County. The Commission believes these items are reasonable and allow for the protection of the area's character.

A copy of the property owner's petitions requesting this consideration for Historic Registry status is on file in the City Clerk's Office.

Respectfully submitted,  
CITY OF WILDWOOD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Lynne Martin, Chair

ATTEST:

Joe Vujnich, Director  
Department of Planning

cc: The Honorable Edward L. Marshall, Mayor  
Daniel E. Dubruiel, City Administrator  
Dan Vogel, City Attorney

Note: Additions made by the Historic Preservation Commission at their meeting on March 16, 2005 are shown in **bolded, underlined type**, with deletions indicated by a double strike-through line.