

## Modifications To Fairfield Hills Master Plan

*Submitted to The Newtown Planning and Zoning Commission  
In accordance with Section 4.23.230 of The Newtown Zoning Regulations*

April 2007

## Requirements For Modifications

Section 4.23.230 of the Newtown Zoning Regulations requires an application to be filed by the Town of Newtown or its authorized representatives for consideration by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Such application shall be subjected to the same procedures, standards and criteria set forth in Sections 4.23.200 through 4.23.223. In accordance with Section 4.23.230, the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted at its meeting of February 7, 2007 to modify the Master Plan and make application to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

## Description of the Modification

The proposed amendment is the modification of the site of the town offices contained in the approved Master Plan. The approved Master Plan provided two alternatives for town offices. One alternative was the reuse of Shelton House and the other alternative was the demolition of Shelton House with the construction of a new building generally on the current Shelton House site. The approved Master Plan specified that the choice between the alternatives would be based on detailed structural and architectural review and analysis. Subsequent to the approval of the Master Plan, an architectural firm was retained to complete this review and analysis. This resulted in two key findings:

- Shelton House is structurally deteriorated and the design cannot meet town office needs in an effective manner.
- Subsurface conditions on the Shelton House site, specifically groundwater flows, adversely impact new construction on the site.

Based on these results, the Board of Selectmen and the Fairfield Hills Authority request that the Planning and Zoning Commission modify the Master Plan in order to achieve the principle of the location of town offices at a central location on the Fairfield Hills Campus. The selected alternative is to renovate Bridgeport Hall located immediately to the south of Shelton House for town offices. This alternative is consistent with the approved Master Plan from both a locational aspect as well as the fact that Bridgeport Hall is designated in the Master Plan for assembly/office/community reuse.

It is also proposed that the modification include a potential water feature that may be created generally within the area of the current Shelton House site. This water feature would provide both aesthetic and environmental benefits. It would enable what is now a piped and channeled stream which runs underground (including in the basement of Shelton House) to be exposed resulting in a range of ecological benefits. As an aesthetic feature it strengthens the focal point of the town offices and adjacent structures as the center of the Campus.

### Response to Section 4.23.211

Section 4.23.211 sets forth information to be provided in the Master Plan and to be addressed as part of any amendment. This information is as follows:

1. An overall development scenario, a description of the project phasing, potential impact on historic factors and natural resources and the capacity of the infrastructure.
2. An environmental impact study concerning the effect of the master planned development will have upon the environment in general, the aquifer, and the campus character.
3. A plan for vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns and parking areas. The plan shall be designed to demonstrate a harmonious integration of traffic and parking within the campus and the area immediately surrounding the campus. Shared parking areas are desirable and encouraged.
4. A landscaping plan.

The proposed amendment does not impact the subject information which was provided in the approved Master Plan. The amount of square footage of Bridgeport Hall for town offices is similar to that proposed in the Master Plan. Therefore, in terms of project phasing, historic factors, natural resources and the capacity of the infrastructure, the impacts originally identified are not appreciably affected. In fact, the modification will reduce the development upon the campus due to the proposed demolition of Shelton House and the reuse of Bridgeport Hall for town offices. In addition, the potential creation of a surface water feature on the Shelton House site will have a positive impact on the environment. Provisions for vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns and parking areas as contained in the approved Master Plan will continue to be adequate. As cited above, there will be less parking demand and less potential traffic generated as a result of the proposed modification than under the approved Master Plan. The landscaping plan will be modified somewhat with an enhancement surrounding Bridgeport Hall and the potential water feature.

### Response to Section 4.23.214

This section outlines findings that when made by the Planning and Zoning Commission shall result in approval of the Master Plan or modifications thereto. The findings that the plan or amendment is consistent with the FHAR, C&A and APD zones are as follows:

- will not cause unacceptable congestion or traffic hazards on neighboring streets;
- will not substantially impair property values in the neighborhood;
- will not create a health or safety hazard to persons or property on or off the campus;
- is consistent with the Newtown Plan of Conservation and Development.

The proposed modification is consistent with these findings in that the use of Bridgeport Hall for town offices at a square footage similar to that in the Master Plan with demolition of Shelton House will reduce overall development levels and resulting traffic thereby not causing unacceptable congestion or traffic hazards on neighboring streets. Furthermore, the modification does not change appreciably any aspects of the Master Plan which change the findings made as part of the previous approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

#### 4.23.223

This section states that interior renovations and adaptive reuse of existing buildings consistent with the approved Master Plan shall not be subjected to Site Development Plan approval. Therefore, if the modification to the Master Plan for the reuse of Bridgeport Hall for town offices is approved, a Site Development Plan for Bridgeport Hall will not be submitted. However, based upon final design, if substantial external modifications beyond the current footprint of Bridgeport Hall are necessary a Site Development Plan may be submitted. Also, a Site Development Plan for new parking areas will be submitted as necessary. In addition, the potential water feature at the present location of Shelton House will be included in a future Site Development Plan if the water feature becomes a specific proposal.