

TO: Chatham County Planning Board  
Chatham County Commissioners

DATE: July 9, 2010

## REQUEST FOR SKETCH DESIGN APPROVAL SECTION X – PHASES 1 AND 2 FEARRINGTON P.U.D.

At the Planning Department's suggestion we are pleased to provide an overview of the history and evolution of the Fearington P.U.D. to accompany our request for Sketch Design approval.

### OVERVIEW

As Chatham County's first Planned Unit Development, and one that remains active today, it is understandable that some may be unaware of how the community has evolved in partnership with the County's Planning Department and elected officials. The community is generally known as Fearington Village and lies eight miles north of Pittsboro on US 15-501. It was conceived as a rural village by R.B. and Jenny Fitch back in the early 1970's when Jesse Fearington retired from dairy farming on land that had been in his family since the late 1700's. The Fitches purchased this land from the Fearington family at that time.

The Fitches' concept for this farm was to maintain the rural Chatham County character of this 639 acres by preserving both farmlands and woods, and setting the stage for the farm center to slowly grow into a Village center surrounded by country communities or neighborhoods. The farm house was converted into the Fearington House Restaurant, the dairy barn into shops, the Granary became a café, the blacksmith shed was replaced by a bookstore. The silo and big barn remained. Belted Galloway cattle were raised. Slowly the Village began to grow into the destination it is today thirty-some years later with shops, services, cafés, a bank, gardens and Inn. Fearington Village is grouped with the largest employers in Chatham County. There are about 2400 residents and about 1400 residences.

The residential neighborhoods also grew slowly, 20 to 35 homes a year, following the P.U.D. master plan but adjusting as the market and times evolved. This perfectly fit the Fitches' concept. Fearington Village has grown at a pace similar to how villages have grown historically with minor variations over time

to the architecture and the neighborhood land plans. The benefits of this measured steady growth are that neighbors got to know each other and a cohesiveness developed about their community identity. That spirit flourishes today and is reflected in public service efforts and community projects by these residents.

## HISTORY

The original Fearington P.U.D. was approved in 1976 for 1333 dwellings, a commercial village, open space and utilities. In the initial years there were several minor Modification Approvals while the County and the Owner, Fitch Creations, ironed out procedural matters concerning how phasing would be administered and to clarify the land uses and their locations. See Attachment "A" for that plan. Fearington was the first Planned Unit Development in Chatham County.

Sections I, II, III and IV, single-family homes, were approved and constructed over the next ±10 years on the lands north of Villageway (S.R. 1718).

In 1981 the Stutts' land was added to the P.U.D. with an additional 77 units allowed. In 1983 the remainder of the land in that area was added to the P.U.D. with an addition of 32 dwellings. By this time most residential areas were clustered designs saving more open space by using a tighter land plan arrangement for the dwellings.

Fearington Utilities Wastewater Treatment Plant came on line in 1981-1982. Clustering was furthered thus leaving more undisturbed open space land.

Section VI Weathersfield (Townhouses) was approved in 1988. Section VII Camden Park, one of the earliest neo-traditional land plans in the U.S. was approved and construction began in 1991. It was designed surrounding a 15-acre central park with two ponds and 209 single-family dwellings on compact lots. It is directly south of the Village Center. The last Camden Park home was constructed and sold in 2008 (a 17-year build out period).

In the late 1980s Mr. R.B. Moore proposed that Fitch Creations purchase land he owned adjacent to and east of Fearington. With a goal of clustering and setting aside open space, Fitch Creations proposed that a major portion of the Moore lands be approved as an addition to the Fearington P.U.D. The request was approved by the County in 1991 as Section VIII and 160 dwellings were added to the P.U.D. Total Approved P.U.D. dwelling count was then (and is still) 1602. This new area, generally known as Bush Creek, includes both single-family lots, clustered dwellings and attached townhouses in distinct neighborhoods called Langdon Place and Bradford Place.

*Concurrent with this portion of the Moore Lands coming into the P.U.D., a subdivision called Fearington Woods on the remaining Moore and Gust lands was brought before the County and obtained Subdivision Approval in 1989 for 100 single-family 40,000 sq.ft. home sites in two phases. In 2003 there was an addition of the Whittakers' land-locked property with 12 lots. Fearington Woods is not a part of the P.U.D.*

The Approved 1991 P.U.D. Plan (See Attachment “B”) further defined several other land uses within the original undeveloped lands of the Village. There was: 1) A Life Care Retirement Community (known today as “continuing care residential communities”) sited south of Camden Park East; 2) A “Town Square” commercial center at 15-501 in the southeast corner of the P.U.D.; 3) A small lot community (the Knolls today); 4) Several clusters of townhomes; and 5) A large area with two traditional neighborhoods of small single-family lots with alleys similar to Camden Park.

Since 1991 Section VIII has been almost completely constructed. During this time Fitch became more convinced that there was a need for a continuing care community. Mr. Fitch began exploring that concept for both Ferrington residents and residents of the community at large. Several healthcare providers and CCRC developers showed interest. Mr. Fitch also realized that the need for a CCRC was greater than the need for another shopping area and proposed that the commercial Town Center land become the retirement community site. On the land formerly shown as retirement community Fitch proposed single-family, traditional neighborhoods.

A national continuing care developer, CRSA, expressed an interest in Ferrington Village. Duke University Medical Services also had an interest in creating a Wellness Center in conjunction with the CCRC for the residents of Ferrington Village, and for the community at large. This was viewed as a major benefit to the County and Ferrington Village, and studies for a CCRC and Wellness Center began.

In April of 1999 a request for Sketch Plan was submitted to the County and was approved for Section IX, Galloway Ridge. The neighborhoods for the remaining lands and those under or in development included: Section IX Galloway Ridge; Section X, Camden styled Single Family; Section XI, now the Knolls; Section XII, townhomes; Section XIV, Camden Park styled neighborhood; and Section XV, clustered cottages now called Millcroft. Section X remained as a neo-traditional land plan but was adjusted at the Galloway lands and the lot sizes matched those of Camden Park.

The next year, 2000, at the request of Galloway’s partner, Duke Community Medical Services, another request for the Sketch Plan for Galloway Ridge was submitted to the County and was approved. It consisted of internal layout changes and a dwelling number adjustment. All other areas of the P.U.D. except the land where Galloway Ridge was to occupy remained unchanged in that request. Ferrington’s overall dwelling unit count remained unchanged. See Attachment “C”.

NOTE: All dwelling units in Galloway are a part of, or come out of the overall Approved Dwelling count of the Ferrington P.U.D. No new additional dwellings were requested beyond the 1602 units approved in 1991.

In 2008 Galloway Ridge made a third Sketch Plan submission to allow expanded health care facilities, auditorium, and the other phase of independent living units per the Master Plan. This request was approved by the County in

2008. Dwelling count of 1602 remained as Ferrington's approved number of dwellings.

*Concurrent with Ferrington P.U.D.'s normal growth of 20 to 35 homes a year, Wade Barber in 2005 requested that Fitch Creations consider allowing him access to his land-locked parcel south of Ferrington's southeastern property corner. Access to the south had been a condition of the 1991 P.U.D. Approval but the exact location had not been determined. A route from South Langdon Street was created. Mr. Barber's development plan was for a single-family subdivision with one-acre lots. It would be served with sanitary sewer by Ferrington Utility and County water from the system within Ferrington. This new subdivision, named Henderson Place, now has Preliminary Plat Approval from the County and will start construction when the housing market improves. Henderson Place is not a part of the Ferrington P.U.D. Fitch Creations has no ownership in Henderson Place.*

Today the undeveloped portions of Ferrington P.U.D. (Sections X and XII) lie largely along the southern property line between Galloway Ridge on the west and the Knolls to the east. Weathersfield and East Camden and Millcroft Streets make the north and northeast boundary of this ±124 acre tract. Ferrington has 226 dwellings left to build of the 1602 allowed.

### THIS REQUEST

This application is for the Sketch Plan for a portion of Section X, at the area west of the Knolls and south of Millcroft. It is an area of about 23 acres. The current Approved plan shows a neo-traditional neighborhood land plan. This request is for: 1) a one-street neighborhood of twelve (12) single-family homes, and 2) a cluster home neighborhood of 29 units similar to the Knolls and Millcroft.

This request is consistent with a current Sketch Design in that it is for single-family development featuring larger lots and buffers and about 30 less dwellings than shown on the Approved Plan for this particular area.

These two new neighborhoods will be served by State maintained roads. The subdivision street will be State maintained. In the clustered home neighborhood this proposal is for a private road with State maintenance as an option being explored. Water will be by Chatham County. Sanitary sewer will be by Ferrington Utilities. (See letter from engineer Alan Keith of Diehl & Phillips stating that water and sewer capacity is available to serve these neighborhoods – Attachment "F".)

The Sketch Plan for this area is attached. Attachment "D" shows the overall P.U.D. lands, an enlargement of all of Section X of the P.U.D. as currently approved. This Sketch Plan, we feel is a plan more sensitive to the environment and to today's market, and is consistent with the current P.U.D. Approval. The

large scale drawing of this request showing contours and more detailed information is Attachment "E".

We ask that you approve this Request.

Sincerely,

SEARS DESIGN GROUP, P.A.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Sears". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan C.L. Sears, ASLA

Attachment: Attachment "A" – 1976-1978 P.U.D. Plan  
Attachment "B" - 1991 P.U.D. Plan  
Attachment "C" – 2000 P.U.D. Plan  
Attachment "D" – Section X showing this Submission  
Attachment "E" – Large Scale Section X Plan showing Phase 1 and Phase 2  
Attachment "F" – Water/Sewer Letter from Diehl & Phillips Engineers