

November 30, 2020

Via Email and U.S. First Class Mail

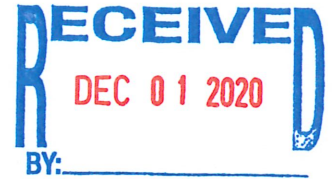
P.O. Box 79

Westtown, PA 19395

Westtown Township Planning Commission

1039 Wilmington Pike

West Chester, PA 19382



Dear Westtown Planning Commission:

Re: Keystone Custom Homes Stokes Property Sketch Plan

The residents of the 17 home Shiloh Hill community oppose the development of the Stokes Farm site as currently envisioned in the sketch plan (dated 11/10/2020) provided by Keystone Custom Homes. Our community supports an outcome that prioritizes undisturbed open space or R1 one acre minimum lot development, but we also appreciate the need to balance open space with housing demand. We strongly believe that our proposed changes to Keystone Custom Home's sketch plan, as discussed below, can result in a project that better meets the goals of preserving the safety and beauty of our Westtown neighborhood while also providing enhanced open space and substantially similar new home development.

Shiloh Hill Drive should not be used as an Access/Exit road

Keystone Custom Homes (KCH) is proposing the use of Shiloh Hill Drive as 1 of 2 points of entrance and exit for their planned 62 home development. This will significantly degrade the safety of Shiloh Hill Drive and our neighborhood. For the last 40 plus years, Shiloh Hill Drive has served as the sole point of entrance and exit for the 17 homes that comprise the dual cul-de-sac community known as Shiloh Hill. Residents regularly walk along Shiloh Hill Drive as it serves as the only dedicated access to the community pool and community pond, both of which are located along Shiloh Hill Drive. Members of our community, including many older persons over 65 and young children, actively use Shiloh Hill Drive for walking, running, and biking. If permitted by the Township as 1 of 2 planned points of access and egress under the KCH design, 62 new homes could elect to regularly use Shiloh Hill Drive. If even half elect to favor Shiloh Hill Drive, the daily car volume will nearly triple (from 17 homes of usage to 48 total with the addition of 31 new KCH homes). This translates into a massive increase in not only vehicle volume and traffic, but also noise. In addition, there would likely be much greater use of Shiloh Hill Drive by school buses and Amazon, UPS, USPS and similar delivery vehicles traveling to and from the new 62 home development. The potential for shortcut traffic through the neighborhood, seeking to avoid an ever-busier intersection at Shiloh and Little Shiloh Roads, is also a concern. Together, these increases, as well as potentially two or more years of construction traffic, will seriously impact and degrade the safety, nature and character of the existing Shiloh Hill community.

Shiloh Hill Drive was originally developed to serve the small number of vehicles from the 17 homes in a cul-de-sac neighborhood, providing a safe environment for recreation - sheltered from the growing traffic, speed and dangers of walking along Shiloh or Little Shiloh Roads. It was never intended to serve as an entrance and exit for a major housing development. It is steeply sloped, sharply curved at a point of poor visibility, lacks sidewalks critical for pedestrian safety and lacks suitability to handle the increased traffic load. Simply put, an explosion in traffic volume from 62 new homes is dangerous to and untenable for the homeowners and children of our community.

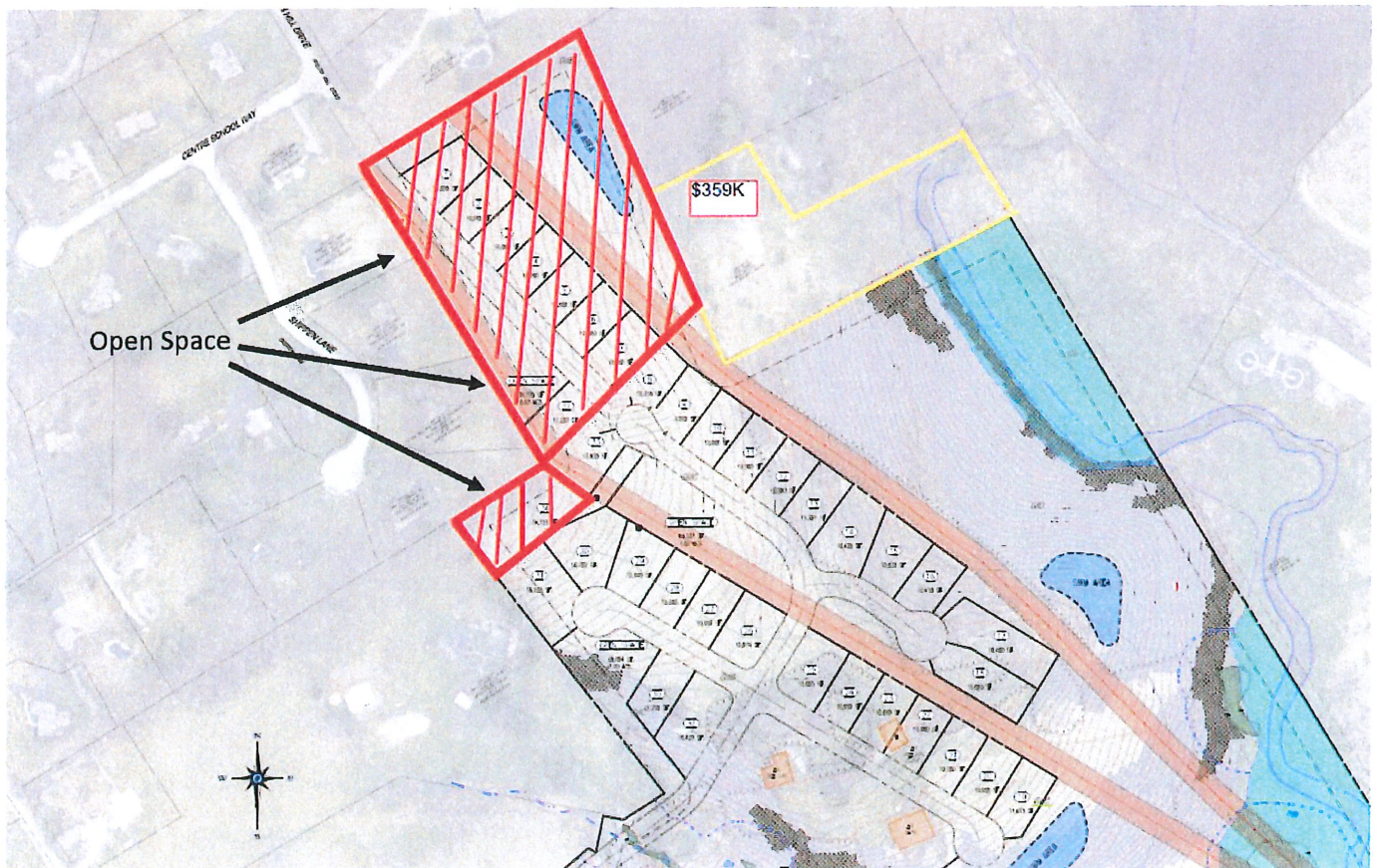
The proposal by KCH to use Shiloh Hill Drive seems to be contrary to Westtown's Flexible Development Guidelines. Per § 170-90, C (1), "Flexible development shall be so located with respect to major streets and highways or other transportation facilities as to provide direct access to such developments **without creating traffic along minor streets in residential neighborhoods outside such developments.**" As stated above, the use of Shiloh Hill Drive as a means of access and egress will clearly create a substantial increase in traffic along our minor "No Outlet" street and is in contradiction with the Flexible Development Code.

Preservation of Open Space

Westtown's 2019 Comprehensive Plan clearly and articulately outlines the need for additional housing capacity while striving to preserve the last few precious areas of open space that are central to character and identity of the Township. KCH's proposed sketch plan for development of the Stokes property overly favors development at the expense open space, particularly adjacent to the Shiloh Hill neighborhood. The lack of effective open space, buffers and screening are, in our view, unlike any other adjacent developments in the township, and particularly those in the R-1 zone district. KCH's proposed plan fragments usable open space in a manner inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the history of the Stokes property.

As residents of Shiloh Hill, we are proposing the following alteration to KCH's sketch plan, which we believe better satisfy the 2 stated objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. The most important change is to preserve as open space approximately 6 acres on the northern end of the Stokes property that are contiguous to several of our homes (see Figure 1 with new open space area crosshatched in red). This creates a consolidated portion of land that can continue to be appreciated as open space in the spirit of Westtown's Comprehensive Plan. We would encourage KCH to create a walking path around the perimeter of the open space to encourage community use and interaction between existing and new neighborhoods. Preservation of this area as open space would require the elimination of 9 planned homes (and the street capped with a new cul-de-sac). KCH can review their design to determine what options, if any, exist to relocate any of the 9 displaced planned homes. This change in KCH's sketch plan allows for needed housing capacity while protecting and enhancing a larger portion of continuous open space. In addition, Westtown's Shiloh Hill neighborhood would then be largely unimpacted by KCH's development plan, particularly as Shiloh Hill Drive no longer needs to serve as a main artery of thoroughfare. The needs of long-standing residents are therefore more equitably balanced with the need for Township expansion as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan (key excerpts of which are shown at the end of this memo).

Figure 1 - Shiloh Hill Neighborhood Traffic/Open Space Counterproposal to KCH's Sketch Plan

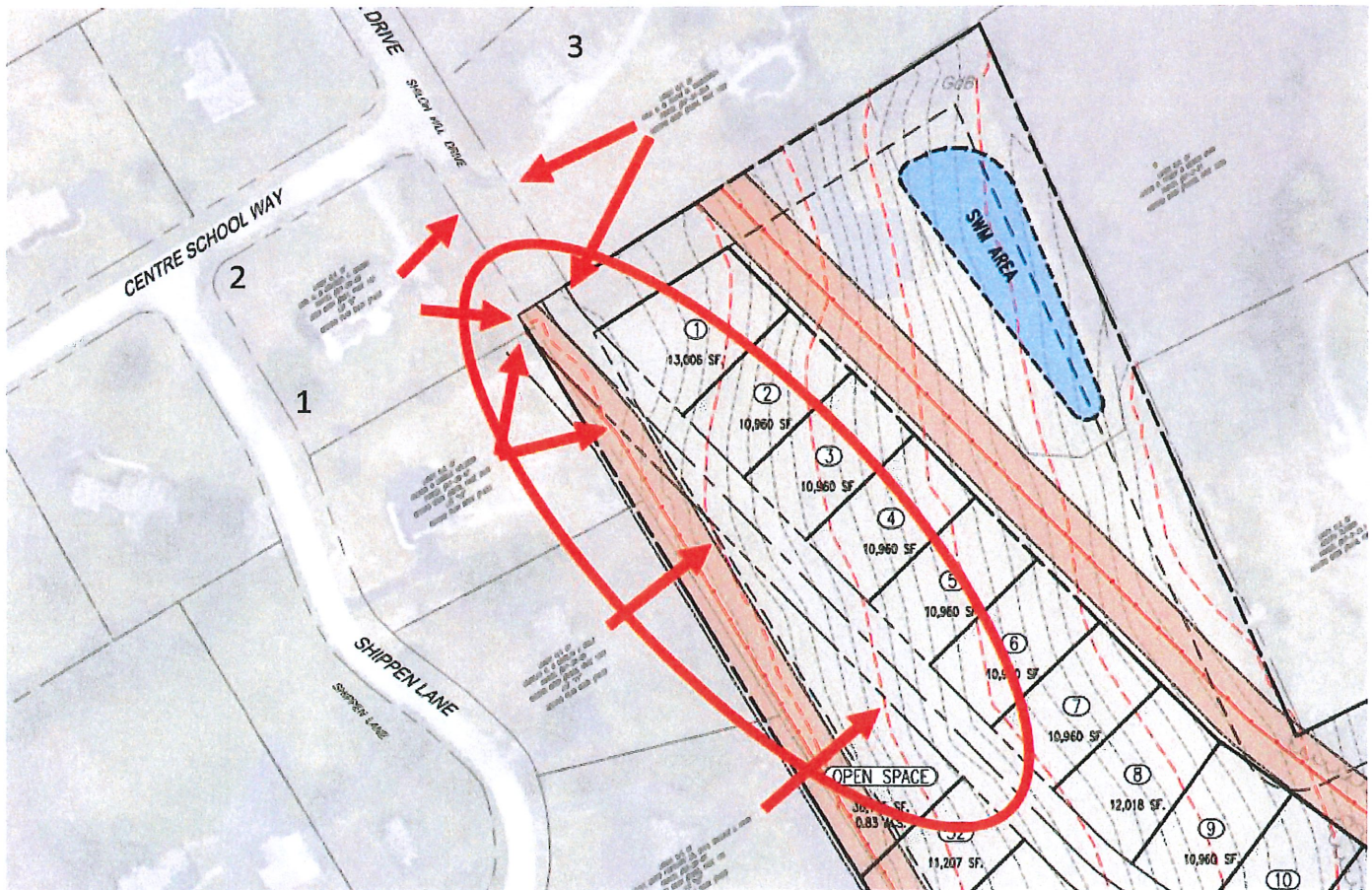


Shiloh Hill Drive Easement

The easement for connection to Shiloh Hill Drive was granted well before the introduction of Westtown's Flexible Development Procedure. At the time of the easement's granting, R-1 zoned land required a 1 acre minimum for residential development. It is highly unlikely the easement was anticipated to be used to support 62 additional homes, most of those built on 1/3 acre or smaller lots. The easement to access Stokes from Shiloh Hill Drive is outside of the originally intended spirit at the time of easement granting and would funnel substantially more traffic volume onto a road and neighborhood never built or intended to accommodate that increased load.

In addition, and even more concerning and troubling, is the proposed path of the easement on KCH's plan which extends Shiloh Hill Drive so closely along existing residents' property lines. KCH's proposed extension of Shiloh Hill Drive runs directly along several Shiloh Hill residents' properties (see Figure 2). This threatens the residents' ability to peacefully and private enjoy their property and introduces substantial safety concerns for families with yards impaired by the proximity of the new road. Such impairment also has the potential to severely impact current residents' property values. KCH's plan places a road dangerously close to the rear of existing properties, while none of the planned KCH homes suffer from the same dangerous consequence. As a remedy to this impairment, the Shiloh Hill neighborhood strongly recommends the preservation as open space for northernmost 6 acres of the Stokes Farm site and the prohibition of the use of Shiloh Hill Drive as a means of residential access to any planned homes.

Figure 2 - Existing Shiloh Hill Residents Most Affected by Shiloh Hill Drive Easement



Preservation of Shiloh Hill Community and Open Space with New Development

The Shiloh Hill neighborhood supports the Township's need to create additional capacity for a growing population and is not opposed to development. Progress, however, should never come at the expense of existing residents, homeowners, and taxpayers, many of whom have lived here for over 30 years. KCH's

current design pits growth against existing residents and the intrinsic qualities that make Westtown such a desirable place to live. KCH's current plan would upend a neighborhood emblematic of Westtown's scenic characteristics to maximize the number of homesites in a new development. Through our proposed changes, we firmly believe that a better balance of open space, neighborhood preservation and new development can be achieved. Unlike KCH's plans, our recommendations are also consistent with the guidance of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan:

1. Preservation of Neighborhoods

Consider amending Township regulatory provisions to **preserve the nature of present neighborhoods, particularly with respect to potential in-fill development**, focusing on: the unique needs of Westtown's numerous institutional properties; mixed use zoning opportunities; **safe pedestrian and vehicular access interconnections; and natural, historic, scenic and energy resource conservation;**

2. Preservation of Open Space

Farmland under active cultivation is a key defining characteristic of the Westtown landscape. Open fields and crops are visible from many roadsides, as well as the farmsteads and agricultural related businesses that support them. **This rural character is threatened as development pressure continues to increase in the region. It has the potential to permanently impact the character of Westtown and alter the quality of life for residents. The preservation of agricultural open space is a top priority of this comprehensive plan as discussed elsewhere.**

3. Westtown Resident Feedback via Survey

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Oppose	Responses
Preserve remaining open space by supporting agricultural use and by promoting conservation efforts. Count Row %	368 71.9%	94 18.4%	30 5.9%	11 2.1%	9 1.8%	512

Ensure that new development complements existing neighborhood character. Count Row %	336 65.6%	106 20.7%	41 8.0%	20 3.9%	9 1.8%	512
--	--------------	--------------	------------	------------	-----------	-----

	Fully Supported	Somewhat Supported	No Opinion	Do not Support	Strongly Oppose	Responses
Open space preservation Count Row %	267 52.0%	118 23.0%	43 8.4%	51 9.9%	34 6.6%	513

The Shiloh Hill Community is committed to working collaboratively with Westtown Township and KCH to achieve an outcome consistent with the 2019 Comprehensive Plan while still protecting the integrity, safety and value of existing neighborhoods. We respectfully request an opportunity to proactively discuss our proposal in greater detail. Thank for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you regarding next steps.

Sincerely,



Andrew and Camille Holstein
913 Shippen Lane
West Chester, PA 19382
(484) 757-8875

cc (via email):

Mila Robinson, Westtown Staff Liaison

Judy and Scott Balthazar, 919 Shiloh Road
Jane and Steve Bernard, 1012 Centre School Way
Charles and Marilyn Bolz, 915 Shippen Lane
Barry and Deb Borden, 920 Shippen Lane
Earl and Lorie Brown 1018 Centre School Way
Justin and Lori Caranfa, 918 Shippen Lane
Mike and Pam Cazaubon, 1015 Centre School Way
Kurt Fletcher and Alaina Simons, 1013 Centre School Way
Barbara Fox, 919 Shippen Lane
Bob and Maryann Irvine, 1014 Centre School Way
Ann and Wally Kahn, 917 Shippen Lane
Hans and Josie Levert, 904 Shiloh Hill Drive
Mike and Susie Tysowsky, 1017 Centre School Way
Paul and Susan Vanscovich, 911 Shiloh Hill Drive