

Ben Lomond Overlay Sought

By EDWARD T. HEARN
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The Prince William County Planning Commission is moving ahead with a plan to protect historic Ben Lomond manor that includes the same stringent zoning rules that are being considered for Buckland.

The commission agreed unanimously Wednesday to have the county's planning staff recommend whether the Ben Lomond site on Sudley Manor Drive should become an historic overlay zone — a popular method of saving the county's cultural treasures.

"I think that would be good. We are really trying to preserve the historic integrity of the place," said Roger Maier, executive director of the Prince William Cultural Arts Federation.

Built in 1837, Ben Lomond manor was once a part of the 2,000-acre farm. The two-story red shale house served as a military hospital during the Civil War. Small slave quarters dating to 1800 flank the main house.

The overlay zone — one of the county's strongest curbs on land-use and building — would allow planners to review any construction or demolition project within the six-acre Ben Lomond site.

Next month, the commission is to hold a public hearing on an overlay zone for Buckland, the tiny mill town near the Prince William and Fauquier border on Lee Highway.

So far, most of Buckland's residents and all the commissioners have endorsed the idea of stiffening building regulations as means of preserving the village for generations to come.

Although Buckland has about 21 historic homes — most of them privately owned — the Ben Lomond site contains the manor house, the slave quarters, and a smokehouse and dairy house built at about the same time as the manor. The property also includes a farm foreman's house, built in the early 1900s.

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Jerry Foster — The Journal Messenger

Ben Lomond Manor

BULL RUN REG LIB

**Prince William Public Library
Manassas, Va.**

Overlay Sought

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Gainesville Planning Commissioner Richard Hefter said, even though the county has better control over Ben Lomond than Buckland, the overlay zone for Ben Lomond would serve to retard encroaching development on the perimeter.

"There's no buffer area imposed under the zoning ordinance," Hefter said. "I think (the overlay zone) would make people more sensitive to development in adjacent areas so that at least they don't detract from the area."

Former Gainesville Supervisor Tony Guiffre, who helped form a citizens' committee to raise funds for Ben Lomond, said the overlay zone may not be necessary but it could prove useful.

"If there's absolutely no reason to, then that's fine,"

Guiffre said. "It's a historic structure and we need to bend over backwards in this county to preserve the integrity of the site."

The committee is seeking private funds to restore the manor house and open at least portions of it to the public. The goal is to raise about \$100,000 to match the county's funding total since about 1984, Maier said.

Maier also said that Del. Bob Harris, R-Fairfax, Prince William, has agreed to sponsor legislation in the upcoming General Assembly to get \$30,000 for Ben Lomond restoration.

For many years, Ben Lomond manor has been closed to the public. The cultural federation has been renting the top floor as office space from the county for \$1 a year, Maier said.