

- Conservation Areas are the first areas to be identified when designing the subdivision. Development Areas are identified only after Conservation Areas have been designated. The applicant and the Planning Board shall select Conservation Areas and Development Areas as early as possible in the subdivision review process (during the Pre-Application Conference stage). Agreement on the conceptual design of a Conservation Design Subdivision at this early stage is intended to ensure that the greater expense of a more detailed, engineering-level design is not undertaken on a layout that is inconsistent with the town's goals for development.
- Conservation of important natural, cultural, and scenic resources shall be the starting point for the design of subdivisions using the CDS process. Protection of wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes and streams shall be the guiding principle in designating a subdivision's conservation area. Additional lands that contribute to the unique character of the parcel to be subdivided may also be included in the subdivision's conservation area. Such lands shall contain important open space resources including, but not limited to:
 - a. Existing farms,
 - b. Land suitable for agricultural use,
 - c. Land for recreational use including potential trail linkages to adjoining lands
 - d. Environmentally sensitive lands,
 - e. Lands that are inappropriate for development,
 - f. Lands that adjoin other conservation lands and larger tracts of land which have the potential to create continuous networks of open space,
 - g. Rural character of the surrounding area, and
 - h. Scenic rural roads and viewsheds.

Land designated for permanent conservation shall be limited to the following uses:

- a. Farm operation land (farm operation land shall not include agricultural buildings except fences)
 - b. Public open space
 - c. Private open space
 - d. Forestry or forest farming operations
- The designation of land for development with Conservation Design Subdivisions shall be made in consideration of the town's desire to:
 - a. Avoid locating buildings in open fields. Preference will be to locate structures at the edges of fields along more heavily vegetated areas.
 - b. Site buildings so that they do not protrude above treetops

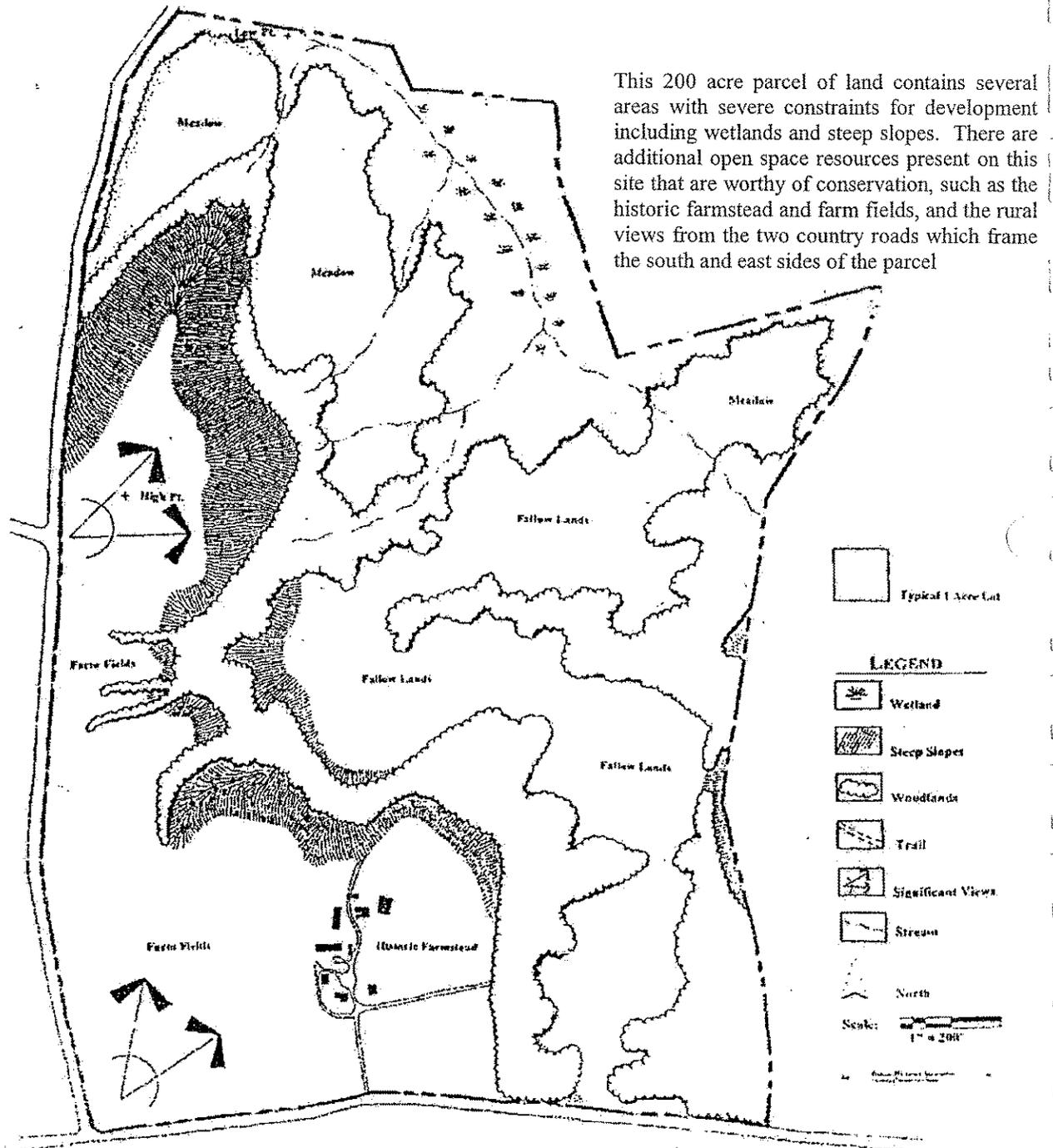
and the crest lines of hills. Buildings shall be sited so as to use existing vegetation to buffer the view of new structures from pre-existing public places and roads.

- c. Retain and re-use existing farm roads and country lanes instead of constructing new roads or driveway.
 - d. Minimize clearing of vegetation at the edge of existing roads, clearing only as much as necessary to create a driveway entrance with adequate sight distance.
 - e. Minimize the disturbances of natural features of the landscape.
 - f. Minimize the number of curb-cuts on existing town, county, and state roads.
 - g. Use curves in driveways and new roads to increase the screening of buildings.
 - h. Consider the potential impact of new homes on existing neighbors when new structures are located.
 - i. Avoid locating new homes near existing farms and farmlands.
 - j. Build new homes only on lands that are most suitable for development and associated wells and septic systems.
- Conservation design for subdivisions is preferred to conventional subdivision design because it is a development process which allows the preservation of significant areas of important open space within the Town. Because the minimum lot size and other area requirements are reduced for these subdivisions, there is considerably more room for creativity in subdivision design. This flexibility allows important site features and open space resources to be conserved, while allowing homes to be located on the most suitable lands. It also provides the ability to situate the homes in harmony with the land landscape.
- The design flexibility provided by the CDS process is intended to ensure that important site features and open space resources are conserved, and the rural character of the Town of Northumberland is protected. This is why these regulations have been adopted.
- There is no “one-size fits-all” solution to creating a subdivision that conserves significant features of the landscape while locating homes to take maximum advantage of the open space amenity created. However, the following illustrations demonstrate a recommended design process for subdivisions that utilize the Conservation Design Subdivision approach.
- The most important idea contained in these regulations is to design with the landscape. The design process illustrated on the following pages provides a “way of thinking” about the layout of a rural

subdivision. This way of thinking, which starts with the identification of conservation areas, should be foremost in the mind of an applicant when designing a subdivision, and shall guide the Planning Board when reviewing applications.

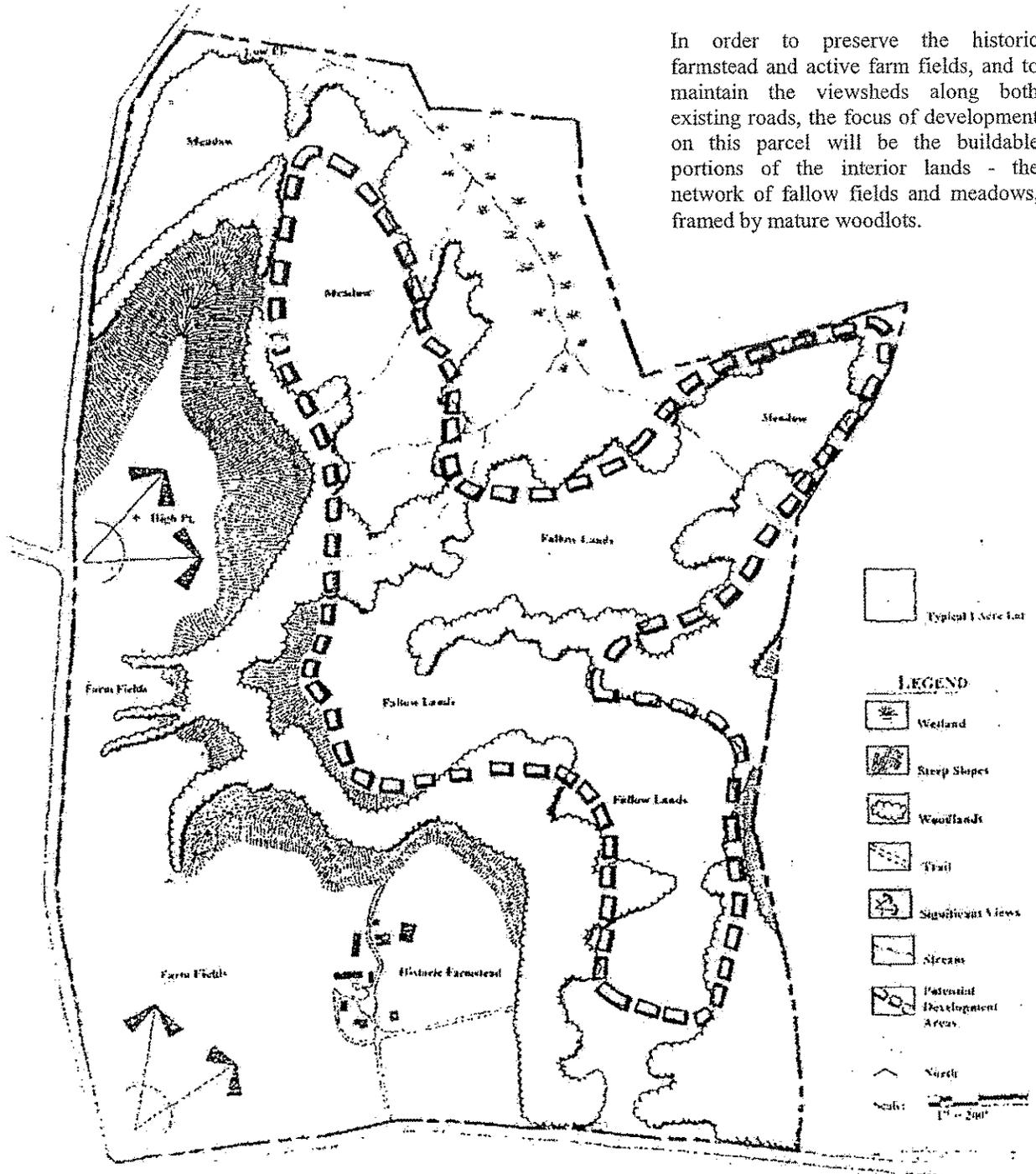
The Design Process For Conservation Design Subdivision Options

Step 1: Analyze the unique landscape features of the parcel to be subdivided and identify lands with severe constraints to development and other areas that are worthy of conservation. These will be the potential Conservation Areas.



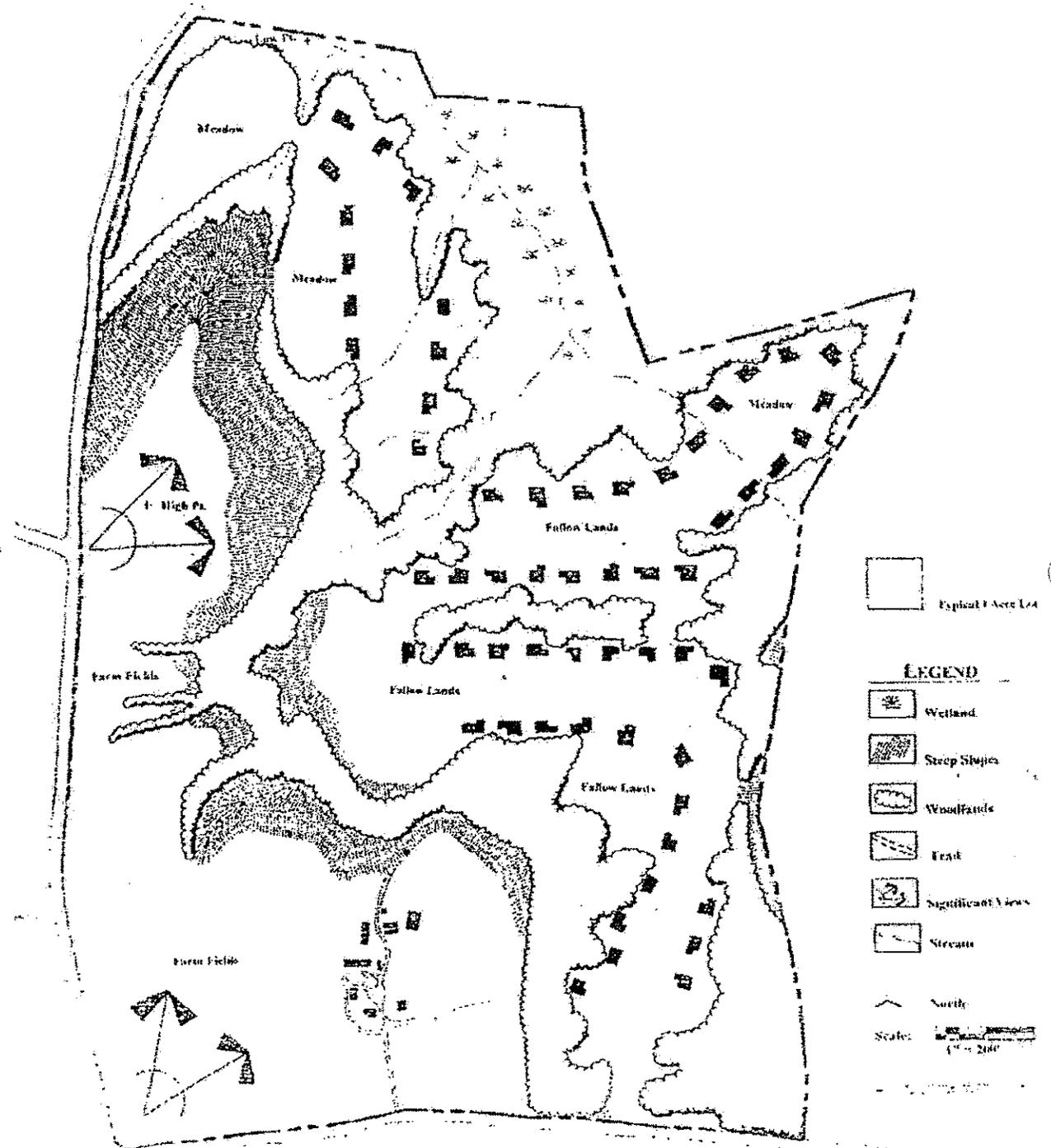
The Design Process for Conservation Design Subdivisions

Step 2: Based on the identification of conservation areas in Step 1, identify remaining areas that are suitable for development. These will be the potential Development Areas.



The Design Process for Conservation Design Subdivisions

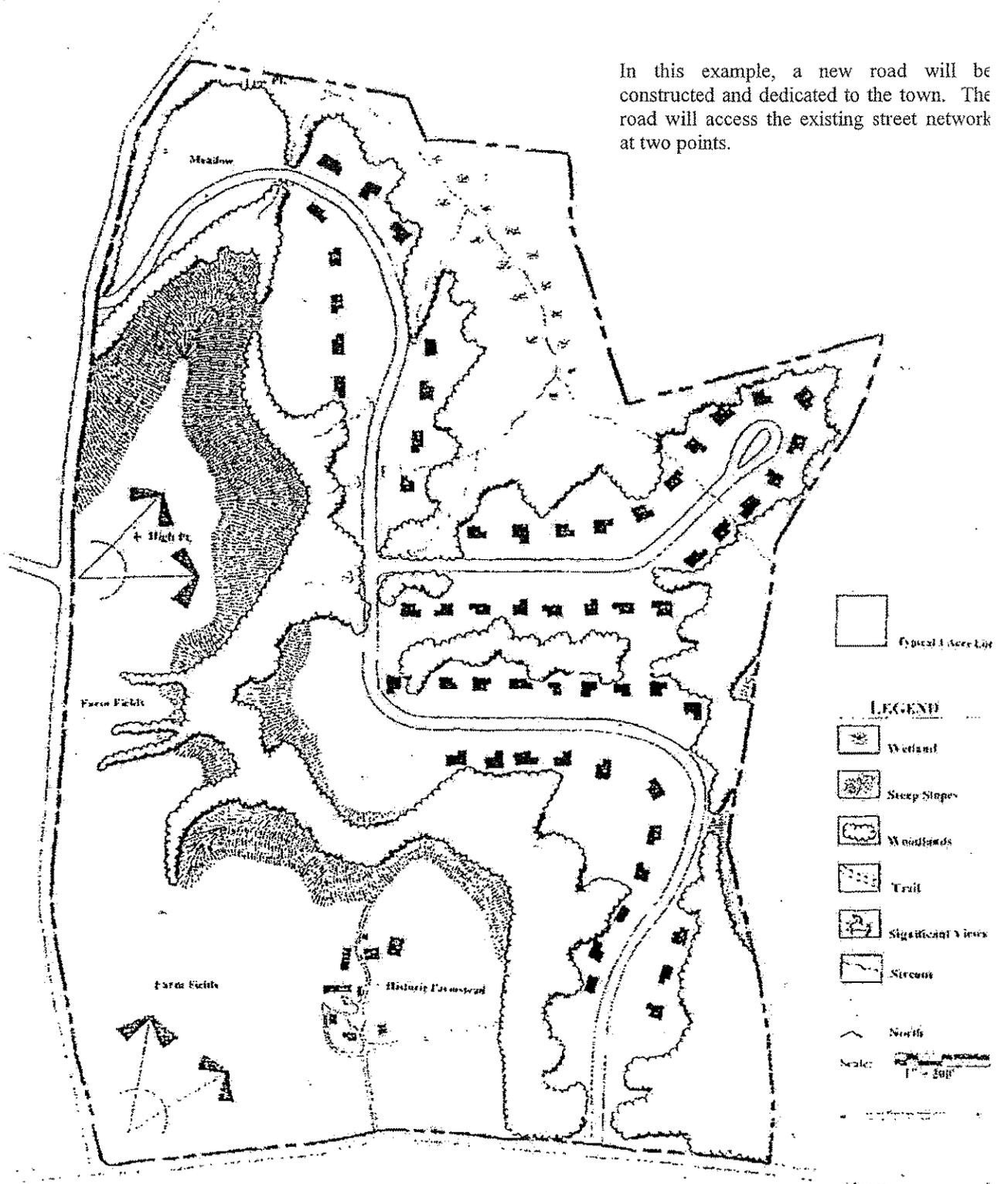
Step 3: Locate homes in the potential Development Areas.



The Design Process for Conservation Design Subdivisions

Step 4: Align roads to provide access to each of the homes.

In this example, a new road will be constructed and dedicated to the town. The road will access the existing street network at two points.



The Design Process for Conservation Design Subdivisions

Step 5: Draw in lot lines and determine ownership and necessary accommodations for the permanently protected open space created from this subdivision.

In this example, the 59 new housing lots range in size from the minimum 1 acre (as required under zoning), to about 2 acres.

The owner of the historic farmstead retains ownership of the farm fields and continues to work these lands. A conservation easement is placed on these lands to ensure that they remain undeveloped in the future.

The remaining open lands are owned by a homeowner's association and are also protected from further development through the use of a conservation easement.

A network of nature trails allows residents to enjoy the natural beauty of this site.

