

or educational institutions, involves a collision course with natural features. Rational controls are needed to curb unrestricted building pressures.

Concrete is no substitute for giant red oaks and copper beeches. And no one loses anything except the right to be a spoiler.

# Natural Riverdale

Several institutional landowners in Riverdale are fighting the mapping of a special natural-area district in Riverdale that would protect one of the city's finest remaining landscapes. The need for special zoning to safeguard such districts has been recognized by the City Planning Commission, which recently made its first natural-area designation in the Staten Island greenbelt.

In Riverdale, the homeowners are for the proposed zoning but such schools as Manhattan College, the College of Mount St. Vincent and the Horace Mann-Barnard Preparatory School are against it. They fear depreciation of property values and infringement on their unrestricted use of the land. They could not be more mistaken. The fact is that property values are enhanced, not reduced, by this kind of protection, as local **realtors** have testified. But even more basic, this is not confiscatory legislation; it does not foreclose development or proscribe change. The restriction imposed is that building plans must be reviewed and approved by the commission to assure that construction is sensitive to the site and does not destroy its special qualities.

What can be destroyed is a unique and beautiful terrain with at least seventy varieties of trees and some of the oldest rock formations in the city. The natural course of development, whether by commercial builders

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