

Correspondence
Received to Date
10-29-2003

Regarding Proposed Designation of
8501 Woodhaven Boulevard
on the *Master Plan for Historic
Preservation*

Cavicchi, Clare

From: Resnick, James [James.Resnick@montgomerycountymd.gov]
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2003 1:50 AM
To: Cavicchi, Clare
Cc: Cheng, Annette; Gutschick, Scott; Donahue, Michael
Subject: Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: 8501 Woodhaven Blvd (MCFRS Correspondence 361-03)

Ms. Cavicchi:

I am writing in response to Ms. Gwen Wright's letter of 6-October to County Executive Douglas M. Duncan concerning the property at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard.

The Montgomery County Fire Rescue Service (MCFRS) is urging the retrofit of all single-family dwellings with an NFPA-approved fire sprinkler system, as detailed in Montgomery County Bill 25-03 (which actually goes into effect on January 1, 2004). Details on the bill can be found at

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mc/services/dfrs/documents/councilbill300.pdf .

Montgomery County recently experienced its largest dollar loss fire, in an un-sprinklered, historic building at the National Capital Trolley Museum. The MCFRS is entrusted to safeguard the special and historical properties within the County. What we are asking for from the community is to do their share in reducing the chance of a fire that could destroy a historic property in the County, by having it sprinklered.

Finally, the MCFRS would ask that this property's street address be identified by 6" numbers, prominently displayed near the front door against a contrasting background. As a historic property, this house will be viewed by many, and the simple act of having an easily noticeable address could go a long way in setting a standard for that community.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**District Chief Jim Resnick
Manager, Office of Research and Strategic Planning
Montgomery County Fire Rescue Service
101 Monroe Street 12th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850
240-777-2466 (office)
240-777-2443 (fax)
james.resnick@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov**

October 28, 2002

Historic Preservation Commission
C/O Gwen Marcus Wright
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: 8501 Woodhaven Blvd.
Bethesda, Maryland

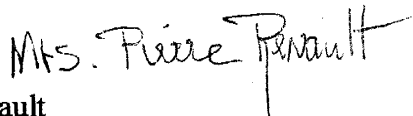
Meeting Date: November, 5, 2003
Montgomery Regional Office

My late husband, Dr. Pierre Renault & I moved to our house in Woodhaven with our two young daughters in 1974 after renting a house in Chevy Chase when we moved to the Washington area from Chicago. I was aware of the Woodhaven area for sometime before we bought our home since I would drive the county streets in particular school districts in search of a home/neighborhood that fit our values & budget. We responded to an ad in the Sunday "Washington Post" for a house for sale by owner in Woodhaven. My first question to the owners on that initial phone call was, "How many mature trees do you have on your property?" We bought the house in 20 minutes. I have lived in our house for 29 years.

The Woodhaven neighborhood is a treasure & the house at 8501 is central to this neighborhood. If that particular house is demolished, taking the mature trees with it, & is replaced by two giant sized houses overlooking the neighborhood, the remaining Woodhaven houses are diminished in size & character. Although some people share Mr. Stinson's view in the present wave of demand for large, close-in houses, there is also a strong segment of the population who seek out older, unique homes considered adequate in size & special because of the age & settings of the homes. The 8501 Woodhaven Blvd. house now in question is not obsolete as has been suggested. It sits high & dignified on a knoll in an ideal scale of house to land to surrounding houses. It has been well maintained throughout the years. If the house is destroyed, replaced by two new ones, a balance is lost which can only lead to a dominos effect of other houses coming down leading to a patchwork of oversized new houses & smaller "historic" houses, causing the original Woodhaven homes to lose their statue & diminish their uniqueness.

It is my belief that the Planning Board would want to seriously considerate the 8501 Woodhaven Blvd. for the Master Plan at this time as it indeed represents a part of Montgomery County history.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Pierre Renault
8509 Woodhaven Blvd.
Bethesda, MD 20817
(301) 469-7652

MARILYN M. HARPER
CONSULTANT IN HISTORY/HISTORIC PRESERVATION
7400 LAKEVIEW DRIVE, #408
BETHESDA, MD 20817

October 28, 2003

Susan Velasquez, Chair
Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Sent by fax -301-563-3412

Dear Ms. Velasquez:

I am writing to express my strong support for the nomination of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard, in the Woodhaven subdivision in Bethesda, to the Montgomery County Atlas of historic properties and to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.

Summarizing my background briefly, I earned my Master's degree in American Studies/Historic Preservation from the George Washington University in 1989. After working for two years as senior architectural historian for Engineering Science, now part of Parsons Engineering, I joined the National Register of Historic Places as a historian. For eleven years, I reviewed National Register nominations submitted by State Historic Preservation Officers in the southeastern United States. Since my retirement in 2001, I have worked as an independent consultant in history and historic preservation.

The house at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard is an important part of a remarkably cohesive, distinctive, and well-preserved historic district. Planned in 1936, Woodhaven is a classic example of an automobile suburb. It incorporates many of the innovations encouraged by the Federal Housing Administration and embraced by builders seeking critical FHA-insured loans: restrictive covenants both to protect the character of the development and to exclude racial and religious minorities; cost-saving construction techniques, such as the metal windows that still characterize so many of the houses; new labor-saving kitchens and heating systems; the built-in garages necessary in these new suburbs located far from the old streetcar and commuter railroad lines; and, perhaps most importantly, the fusion of buildings and setting into a single, integrated designed landscape. The builders selected a hilly, wooded building site and saved many of the existing trees. The houses are set well back from, and often above the street. The lots are large and well landscaped. Early advertisements proudly announced that Woodhaven was one of the "very few" subdivisions that had been approved by the FHA with no changes.

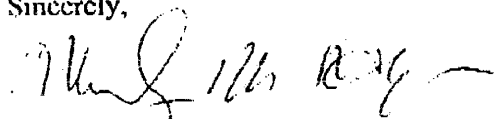
In many ways, however, the Woodhaven subdivision looks back to the 1920s as well—in its size, in the personal involvement of its builder, and in its distinctive, picturesque character. Woodhaven, although originally planned as a much larger area, was a

relatively small project, constructing only a few houses in most years. In that it differed markedly from the large, speculative, "tract" developments that began to appear elsewhere in Montgomery County in the late 1930s. Philip Dein, who moved to Washington in 1936 when Bethesda was one of the few places in the country where the construction industry had essentially recovered from the Depression, built all but a very few of the houses in the district. Dein lived in Woodhaven from the time the first house was constructed until his death in 1962. He often worked with buyers to adapt the houses to meet their needs. The district is very much Dein's personal creation.

And, finally, the distinctive designs of the houses, particularly the Tudor Revival models on Woodhaven Boulevard, share many of the characteristics of the picturesque "period house" of the 1920s: irregular massing with many dormers and projecting porches, steeply pitched roofs, and a variety of highly textured building materials. These include colored roof tiles, rough-cast brickwork, novelty siding, half-timbering, stucco, and stone. The characteristic pale, greenish stone used in most of the houses played, and plays, a central role in unifying the district into a single cohesive and instantly recognizable whole.

It is this personal, picturesque quality, combined with the sensitive fusion between landscaping and architecture and the remarkable integrity of the district, that sets Woodhaven apart from Bethesda's other automobile suburbs of the 1930s. This distinctive neighborhood deserves to be recognized as an important part of Montgomery County history.

Sincerely,



Marilyn M. Harper

cc: Kate Stevenson
Bibb Strench



5001 Louise Drive, Suite 201- Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17055

October 28, 2003

Chairman and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board
Members of the Montgomery County Historical Commission
1109 Spring Street
Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910

Subject: 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard and the Woodhaven Neighborhood, Bethesda,
Maryland

To the ladies and gentlemen of the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery
County Historical Commission:

Residents of the Woodhaven neighborhood requested I provide them with an evaluation of the historic structures within their neighborhood. Following my preliminary assessment of the subject area, it is my opinion that that the Woodhaven neighborhood and specifically the dwelling at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard are worthy of historic merit and architectural significance.

Named after famous American poets, the streets within the Woodhaven neighborhood reveal a great deal about the character of the houses within the development, with street names such as Poe, Thoreau, Alcott and Whittier. Moreover, the homes within Woodhaven are as impressive as the people for which the streets are named, further differentiating the area from other neighborhoods in Bethesda.

The Woodhaven neighborhood possesses a concentration of residences that are united historically and aesthetically by their physical development. The community retains its historic location and setting through topographic features that illustrate its character, namely the rolling hills and wooded knolls that surround each residence. Although modern development and roads have encroached upon the boundaries of the Woodhaven neighborhood, the area itself retains its setting as an early suburban neighborhood without intrusions within the immediate area.

The Woodhaven neighborhood also possesses a strong feeling and association of its historic characteristics. All of the houses were built in the second quarter of the twentieth century. The designs of these house styles were deliberately chosen to mimic those that would be in an English Village. Thus, the neighborhood is filled with predominantly Elizabethan Tudor and Cottage Tudor styles. Brick and stone exteriors unify the Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival

style dwellings that characterize the community. Both styles reflect the time period in which the neighborhood developed. Thus, based on architecture alone, the houses relate to one another.

The houses within the Woodhaven community all have comparable lot size and similar setback from the roadways. The neighborhood has a park-like feel, with houses that compliment the topography of the landscape instead of overtaking it and lack intrusions such as sidewalks and fences that could disrupt the well-manicured lawns. Given the close proximity to and the inclusion of Bradley Boulevard within the neighborhood, the association between the Woodhaven Neighborhood and the former streetcar network is evident.

The materials, design and workmanship of the properties within the Woodhaven Neighborhood also convey the feeling of an early-twentieth century planned community. Philip Dein, the developer of the area, also built and designed the majority of the houses within the Woodhaven neighborhood, and planned the area to look and feel like an English Village. Materials within the district are a mixture of traditional, and what would have been considered the most modern of the time period, such as green clay roofing tiles. At the same time, traditional materials and methods enabled Woodhaven to have a look all its own. For example, quarried stone was used to construct several of the houses. Quality workmanship is evident throughout the Woodhaven Neighborhood in the stylistic details that highlight each residence, making no two exactly alike. The few resources that were built outside of the 1936 to 1950 period and do not meet the theme of the district would be considered noncontributing resources.

With an intact neighborhood such as Woodhaven, each structure is important to the cohesive quality of the area. The dwelling at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard serves not only as an example of the types of buildings present within the neighborhood, but more importantly, it serves as a gateway to the community. It is vital to the preservation and integrity of the area that 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard be added to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* for Montgomery County, Maryland. With the ever-present threat of modern development encroaching upon the greater Washington, D.C. area, it is important to recognize exemplary resources such as the Woodhaven neighborhood and ensure their longevity.

Sincerely,

Janet L. Emery
Architectural Historian
KCI Technologies, Inc.

717 691-19340
(Fax) 717 691-3470

JLE/mp

October 28, 2003

TESTIMONY

In the matter of Woodhaven

My name is William Offutt. I live at 8509 Irvington Avenue in the Bradmoor area of Bethesda. I am a native of Montgomery County and my family has been here since early in the 18th century. I am a retired teacher and the author of Bethesda A Social History.

The desire on the part of the people who reside in the Woodhaven community to preserve their neighborhood should be understandable and applauded. All about them, in subdivisions large and small, in those with houses both more or less expensive than their homes, violent and grandiose change is taking place. Good houses that have stood the test of time are being acquired, bulldozed and replaced by structures that violate the nature of the community, structures which often reflect greed rather than taste. Woodhaven does not want this to happen to them, and the government agencies which can prevent it from happening should support their efforts.

I can think of no reason why Section 2 of Chevy Chase should be designated as historic and protected from the scourge of mansionization while Edgemoor, Huntington Terrace, Brookmont and many other fine communities with homes of equal merit, if not economic value, are allowed to be desecrated by insensitive developers.

Woodhaven traces its history back to the ill-fated Bradley Hills development which ran an electric railway line from Bethesda to Great Falls just as Chevy Chase was from its beginnings a streetcar suburb. The residents of Woodhaven have been at least as diligent as those of Chevy Chase in maintaining their homes and beautifying their neighborhood. Woodhaven has stood the test of time and is a recognizable community, an asset to Montgomery County.

Let us protect it.

Re: 8501 Woodhaven Blvd, Bethesda: Addition to the Locational Atlas

My name is Cynthia Martin. I have lived at 8310 Thoreau Drive for the past 11 years. I was drawn to Woodhaven for its charm as evidenced by the Tudor and Colonial style homes of brick and stone & large wooded lots with many mature plants. My son's father, who is a home inspector and familiar with most communities in the D.C. area, felt that this neighborhood was one of the more unique and beautiful.

While I think that my home is beautiful in its own right, what makes it truly special is the context in which it exists - a neighborhood with large trees, stone retaining walls and similar, complementary styled homes. Woodhaven is truly unique in this area; while other neighborhoods have individual, attractive homes, Woodhaven is joined by a common theme. Woodhaven has a long history of community activities such as the Christmas Eve service on the corner of Woodhaven and Whittier, directly across the street from 8501 Woodhaven, which has been held for over 60 years and a Father's Day picnic.

The home on 8501 Woodhaven is the centerpiece of the neighborhood whether approached from Bradley Boulevard or Whittier Blvd. It is one of the larger homes and sits on a hill in the center of Woodhaven. Its loss would destroy the character of the neighborhood. Once it is gone, it cannot be replaced. Its loss would be the beginning of the end of Woodhaven.

It was with a profound sense of loss and shock that I learned the home had been sold to be demolished and replaced by two McMansions, destroying trees, shrubbery and the essence of the Woodhaven neighborhood. The Woodhaven community had no idea that this house was on the market. The former owners felt that they could get an additional \$300,000 by selling this beautiful and historic home to be destroyed, and I am told they were paid over 1.1 million dollars.

When the neighbors saw furniture being removed from 8501 Woodhaven Blvd over the summer, they were assured by the former owners that they were not selling, but were merely replacing furniture. They lied to their neighbors that they would never sell to a developer. The truth was learned less than 48 hours before the sale occurred and the demolition permit was applied for immediately. Given the duplicity with which the transfer of the home occurred, it cannot be a shock that the community would vehemently oppose destruction – of 8501 and of the neighborhood.

The question has arisen as to why the Woodhaven community had not applied for historic status previously. I naively assumed that zoning regulations would prevent destruction of our neighborhood. I had no idea that someone could raze such beautiful and unique homes to be replaced with monstrosities which will be totally out of character in the neighborhood. The neighborhood is Woodhaven – not zero lot line-haven.

I can understand that as county planner, it would be frustrating to have people protest at the last moment – but the well-orchestrated destruction of our neighborhood was

unknown to the Woodhaven Community. I appreciate the opportunity to request that the Planning Board designate 8501 Woodhaven on the Locational Atlas as a historic home as the first step in designating Woodhaven on the master historic plan.

Cynthia M. Martin
8310 Thoreau Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

301/365-8845
October 28, 2003

Jacqueline A. Sincore
6318 Alcott Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

October 27, 2003

Chairman and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board
Chairman and Members of the Montgomery County Historical Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

RE: Nomination of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard to the Master Plan

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

I provide the attached materials in support of the nomination of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard to the Master Plan. This information is in addition to the oral and written testimony that I have previously provided during public hearings in October of this year. The attached document provides additional information pertinent to the historic nature of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard as well as correcting several statements and characterizations that the developer, Scott Stinson, and his attorney, Gus Bauman, have made during public hearings on this matter.

The attached supports that:

- Real estate agents have confirmed that Woodhaven is unique among Montgomery County neighborhoods in terms of cohesiveness in style, material, date of construction, and landscaping.
- No teardowns have occurred in “old Woodhaven.” The few homes built within the boundaries of the larger Woodhaven community have involved only one “teardown” situation; this situation was unknown until actual demolition was started. All attempts to alter the neighborhood via development projects have been met by strong and united Woodhaven campaigns to prevent disruptive plans. In addition, all improvements to Woodhaven homes have been completed with an eye to consistency with the original style of the homes.
- The developer Scott Stinson’s plans are in complete disharmony with size and height of existing homes, and the set backs and landscaping within Woodhaven. His plans would destroy the lynchpin home of our neighborhood at the main intersection defining the look and feel of the community.

- The condition and functionality of 8501 Woodhaven is excellent, and the home is a shining example of the Tudor revival style of the 1930's.
- The Woodhaven community acted as quickly as possible to save 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard. The home was never listed as for sale and the community was intentionally deceived as to the plans for the home.

In addition, I have attached information demonstrating the tie between 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard and the social history of the neighborhood and the history of mining just steps from this home.

I appreciate your consideration of these materials.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline A. Sincore

**SUBMISSION OF JACQUELINE SINCORE TO THE MONTGOMERY
COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION AND THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING BOARD**

OCTOBER 27, 2003

COHESIVE NATURE OF WOODHAVEN AND ABSENCE OF TEARDOWNS

A. Unique Cohesiveness of Woodhaven

The community of Woodhaven is comprised of 127 homes. However, approximately 50 of these homes comprise the core “old Woodhaven” Tudor and Colonial revival homes constructed by Philip Dein during the 1930’s and 1940’s, and approximately another 20 homes were constructed by Dein during the latter part of the 1940’s. Starting in 1963 and in following years, residents of some of the homes built in close proximity to Woodhaven asked for membership in the Woodhaven Citizens Association in order to participate in social activities. These more modern homes make up the remainder of Woodhaven.

Thus, when one thinks of Woodhaven for purposes of historical significance, we are discussing the core of “old Woodhaven” homes comprised of four homes on Bradley Boulevard, homes on Woodhaven Boulevard from Bradley Boulevard to Hawthorne Road, two homes on Alcott Road, and several homes on Thoreau Road and Poe Road. All of these homes are contiguous and comprise a logical historical district.

The homes described above comprise a cohesive unit in terms of architectural style (Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival), materials (stone, brick, and timbered stucco, slate roofs), set backs, lush landscaping and towering oaks, maples and beeches, size of homes, and portion of lots occupied by the homes. Our community has consulted with several real estate agents who have advised us that no other communities in Montgomery County even come close to the cohesiveness in style, material and date of construction as the Woodhaven homes. This is truly a unique community in Montgomery County in terms of look and feel—it feels a bit like stepping back in time.

While repairs and additions have been made to the Woodhaven homes over the past 67 years, all of these improvements have been made in a manner sensitive to the style of the homes and the character of the neighborhood.

B. No Teardowns Have Occurred in Woodhaven

This section is intended to correct the misstatements made by the developer Scott Stinson and his attorney, Gus Bauman, at public hearings that teardowns have occurred in “old Woodhaven” and that the community never objected to this type of activity in the past. As explained below, Woodhaven is a community that has consistently demonstrated that it cares very much about maintaining the character of the homes within its boundaries and of development abutting the community.

There have been NO teardowns in “old Woodhaven”. The only new home within the boundaries at issue is one Tudor style home that was built several years ago at 6316 Bradley Boulevard on an empty lot.

On the fringes of “old Woodhaven:”

a) In 1981, four homes were built on Whittier Boulevard (8301, 8303, 8305, and 8307). In 1977, a developer, Blitz of Potomac (a.k.a. “the Blitz Brothers”), planned to build 15 houses, to be called Woodhaven Hills, on an unimproved five and one half acre parcel adjoining the Woodhaven community. A unified effort was made by Woodhaven to block this construction. After several years, the developer was allowed to build four homes on a small piece of the five and one half acre parcel. However, no homes were demolished in order to build these homes. In addition, the community took steps to ensure that a road that would have connected the proposed development to Bradley Boulevard via Alcott Road would never be constructed.

b. A new house is under construction at 8309 Woodhaven Boulevard. A home was demolished to make way for the new house; however, this property falls outside the core group of “old Woodhaven” homes. In addition, Woodhaven residents were unaware that the home had been purchased by a developer and was slated for demolition. No posted or mailed notice of demolition was provided to abutting and confronting property owners as is required by Montgomery County demolition permitting procedures. Once demolition was started, and neighboring homeowners became aware of what was occurring, calls were made to county officials to stop the process. Unfortunately, nothing came of these efforts.

c. A remodeling project is underway at 8305 Thoreau Road. The top section of this home is being removed, but the entire home is not being demolished. Again, this property is outside the boundaries of “old Woodhaven.” Again, abutting property owners were investigating how to stop the upper story demolition, but the demolition process overtook their efforts. It is quite disconcerting that, once again, no notice of demolition was provided to adjoining or confronting property owners. These adjoining owners are still working to ensure that the scale and character of this house will not be in complete disharmony with the streetscape and that the remainder of the project is completed pursuant to Montgomery County set back and height restriction regulations.

d. In 1960, Woodhaven successfully opposed a plan by the Burning Tree Swimming Club, Inc. to build a public swimming pool on land adjacent to Woodhaven (between Whittier Boulevard and Bradley Boulevard). Later, when homes were constructed on this same site, Woodhaven was successful in preventing the connection of Whittier Boulevard to Bradley Boulevard.

CONDITION OF 8501 WOODHAVEN BOULEVARD

In addition to being a lovely example of Tudor architecture and being surrounded by lush landscaping and towering 100 foot plus trees, 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard is remarkable for its condition as a structure both inside and out.

The current owner, developer Scott Stinson, has attempted to characterize this home, at both public hearings and in the press, as in tear down condition. In his words, the home is “functionally obsolete.” In fact, Mr. Stinson has used this term to describe Woodhaven houses to me and several of our neighbors. We beg to differ. We have been “functioning” quite nicely in our homes for many years, as have the residents of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard. Having lived next door to this house for over seven years and taken care of it while its owners were away on at least a dozen occasions, I am quite familiar with the condition of the house.

The former owners of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard, Steven and Donna Salamoff, were known for the painstaking care they took of their home both inside and outside. The home boasts a master suite addition, a family room, large living and dining rooms, spacious bedrooms, a newly remodeled eat in kitchen with granite countertops, new wood cabinetry and stainless steel appliances, a finished basement, a two car garage and a large swimming pool. Moreover, the construction is far above today’s building code requirements and the house remains in excellent condition. It would take a great deal of imagination to characterize this home as a “tear down” or “functionally obsolete.”

DEVELOPER SCOTT STINSON'S PLANS FOR 8501 WOODHAVEN BOULEVARD

Scott Stinson, a developer and current owner of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard, plans to demolish the beautiful stone and stucco home and replace it with two homes, which he says will be "in the Tudor style. According to Mr. Stinson: a) these houses will be placed back to back, with one house fronting on Whittier Boulevard and one fronting on Alcott Road. b) one house will be approximately 3400 square feet; not including the basement and a two car garage, the other house will be approximately 3000-3200 square feet, not including the basement and a two car garage.

The current home is 2363 square feet and the two car garage is situated in the basement area. The home faces Woodhaven Boulevard. It is one of four corner lots at the central intersection of the neighborhood. All of the corner lots are substantially larger in size than the other Woodhaven lots and the homes are sited further back from the road. The siting of these corner lot homes was done intentionally to aid in promoting the wooded glade feeling of the landscaping of our neighborhood. This home in particular is prominent in that it sits high on a wooded knoll, thus setting the tone and character for the entire community.

The entire lot size is 15,104 square feet. The lot is studded with towering trees and covered in mature landscaping. The placement of two large houses on this lot would require the elimination of all the large trees, the two stone retaining walls, and would require placement of the two houses so close that very little green space would be retained. We also understand that Mr. Stinson's houses would be much taller than other Woodhaven homes.

These plans are completely insensitive to the architecture of the Woodhaven homes and the look and feel of the streetscape. They would completely destroy a historical home and mar the character of an historical neighborhood of a kind that cannot be found elsewhere in Montgomery County.

THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Developer Scott Stinson has made much of the fact “that he did nothing wrong” and that he “followed all procedures.” We do not have any basis for refuting these statements. However, neither has the Woodhaven community nor individual residents done “anything wrong.” In fact, it is us, the affected residents, who have been in an extremely disadvantaged position since Mr. Stinson’s plans and the plans of the previous owners of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard were hatched.

In the early part of 2003, the previous owners of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard, Steven and Donna Salamoff, advertised their property for sale in a manner aimed at attracting developers. A “For Sale” sign was never placed in the yard and the availability of the home was kept secret from the community by the Salamoffs. No local real estate agents that I have conferred with were aware that this home was for sale. **The contract for purchase between Mr. Stinson and the Salamoffs was entered into in the spring of 2003.**

The extreme secretiveness of the transaction is evidenced by the actions of the Salamoffs over the summer of 2003. They rarely appeared and small vans and Ryder trucks were seen periodically removing furniture. When questioned about the vans, Steve Salamoff responded that they were getting rid of old furniture to make room for new furniture. In fact, the Salamoffs were moving out. A few weeks before the contract closing, I heard a rumor that one of the corner lots at Whittier Boulevard and Woodhaven Boulevard had been sold and a developer was planning to put two houses on the lot. I questioned Steve about this rumor. He appeared shocked and stated, “I would never do that.” When asked if he were thinking of moving anytime soon, he replied, “No, not anytime soon, we’re redecorating.”

The community did not learn of the sale and the impending plans until three days before the closing on the contract. Steve Salamoff stated to neighbors that he didn’t want anyone “messing up [his] deal.”

Once we learned of this news, several neighbors went into action. We immediately began looking into historic designation. This was an issue discussed by our neighborhood in the recent past for the entire community. While the community was interested in learning more about historical designation, it was not felt to be a pressing issue as there was a large group consensus that no one would dream of tearing down our beautiful homes. In addition, over the past several years, community efforts have been invested in addressing several pressing traffic and safety issues.

Parallel to and in concert with our historical designation effort, we sought legal advice regarding subdivision and zoning and provided Mr. Stinson with our attorney’s findings in the hope that Mr. Stinson would decide to alter his plans more in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Stinson and his attorney have tried to characterize this effort as a “subdivision battle.” This simply is not true.

Despite the deadline of three weeks before we had to appear at our first public hearing before the Historic Preservation Commission, the community was able to make an excellent case. We rallied the very next day to appear before the Planning Board. One reason we have been able to accomplish this is because the community has taken great pride in its homes and history and has maintained some records on the community over the years.

Since mid-September, the Woodhaven Citizens Association has met a number of times to address historical designation for 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard, including investigating historical designation for the entire neighborhood. In addition, smaller groups of residents have been working on this issue on a daily basis. This community has done a remarkable job at pulling together in the past two months and presenting a unified effort to save 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard. On the other hand, Mr. Stinson has been making plans for the destruction of this home since spring.

Moreover, it is disingenuous for Mr. Stinson to claim that this home and Woodhaven have no historical significance. No one can drive through Woodhaven without immediately recognizing that it is a place where demolishing a home would be completely unacceptable from many perspectives. Woodhaven as a community, and its individual homes, clearly stand out as special and worthy of historical designation. Mr. Stinson took a calculated gamble in purchasing this property and underestimated the opposition with which he would be faced.

THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF WOODHAVEN

Woodhaven has a long history as a neighborhood, not just a place to live. This has evidenced itself not only by the willingness of its residents to support each other and to tackle issues affecting the community, but also in its active social agenda.

The Woodhaven Citizens Association (WCA) was founded during the early 1940's. At that time and over the years, various subcommittees were formed to address the needs and interests of the neighborhood. Some of these subcommittees were and are: Social, Schools, Entertainment and Recreation, Constitution & By-Laws, Sanitation, Public Health & Welfare, Publicity, Public Safety & Civil Defense, Community Development & Improvement, Highway and Roads, Legislation, Planning & Zoning, Historical, Government, and Traffic and Safety. The WCA meets at least four times a year for business, and many other times during the year for social purposes.

In fact, two special annual events have occurred in Woodhaven for more than fifty years. Every year, since 1942, a Fathers' Day celebration has been held. About 12 families began this tradition under shade trees at the intersection of two, rutted country roads (in front of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard). These early Woodhavenites pooled their war-time ration coupons to purchase meats and other scarce ingredients, including sugar for cakes and cookies. Over the years, these celebrations have become much larger, with games, singing, swimming and a barbeque feast. For many years, this party was held at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard. Also for the past 55 years, Woodhaven has celebrated Christmas Eve with an outdoor pageant beside a large spruce tree planted by the community and lighted during the holiday season. The children of the community reenact the story of the birth of Christ accompanied by adult carolers. The evening is topped off by Santa arriving on a rescue vehicle with kind words and presents for the children. This event has always taken place just across the street from 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard.

Many other social and business gatherings have been held over the years. These annual and semi-annual events include wine and cheese parties, traveling dinner parties, dances, masquerade parties, adult and children's holiday parties, community yard sales, and block parties. The community has also banded together to address development projects, traffic and safety problems, a gypsy moth infestation, crime issues, to host foreign exchange students, and to gather funds to purchase holiday wish list items for underprivileged teens in the area.

World War II presented its own set of home front problems and solutions. Since war-time gasoline rationing served as a deterrent to non-essential trips to the Bethesda library, in 1946, the Shinkmans (8300 Woodhaven Boulevard adjacent to 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard), filled their basement with books and some toys and opened it as the "Dogwood Library." (The Washington Post, August 11, 1946). Once a week, Woodhaven children were allowed to borrow books and enjoy story readings. Mrs. Shinkman was the daughter of one of Britain's best known publishers, Sir Ernest Ben.

Other war-time activities included car pooling to the grocery store, sharing war ration coupons, a men's volley ball team, and planned activities for children during summer breaks from school. A garden club, that still exists, was started during the 1940's and held flower and garden shows and awarded prizes for Christmas decorations. During the 1950's, members of this club received awards for displays at the National Flower Show at the D.C. Armory, Christmas door decorations at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and best merchant door Christmas decoration in Bethesda.

MINING IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY AND IN WOODHAVEN

I. Mining in Montgomery County

Gold is contained in the white quartz rock that abounds in this area. This rock is otherwise known as white flint. The gold vein system runs from Maryland to Alabama.

Commercial gold mining operations in Maryland were carried out from a period just after the Civil War until the early 1950's. The first mention of the discovery of gold occurred as early as 1829. However, the first well-documented account of the discovery of gold in Maryland occurred in 1849 on the farm of Samuel Ellicott, near Olney.

Mining activities occurred throughout the county with the greatest concentration in the Great Falls/Potomac area. Productive mines were also located in Rockville, Ellicott City and Bethesda. The Maryland Mine, now located within the boundaries of the C&O Canal Historical Park at Great Falls, operated as late as 1952 and was one of the largest gold mines in the East. It retains more mining remnants than any other mine in the area.

II. Mines in and around Woodhaven

Two gold mines operated in the area that is now residential Bethesda. The Bethesda gold mine was started in the mid 1880's, although little development work was performed until 1895. The other Bethesda mine was operated by Charles Miller, and was known as the Miller Mine. Unlike some of the other area mines, the Miller Mine was extensive. It exists in a hillside now owned by the Landon School and within the boundaries of the Woodhaven subdivision.

The Miller mine branched out between present day Bradley Boulevard and Wilson Lane, with its entrance just a few short steps from 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard. It was prospected during the middle part of the 1880's with several shafts opened about 1889.

The existence of the gold mine was known to long time residents of Woodhaven. They told of exploring the mine as children, finding a vast chamber and poling deep into the mine tunnel in a flat-bottomed boat, holding torches aloft. Owners of 6318 Alcott Road (adjacent to 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard), in the Woodhaven community, told of "geysers" erupting from mysterious holes in their backyard when it rained. (These geysers turned out to be what prospectors call "snake holes" –water forced up through the ground by flooded tunnels.) The tunnel remained open until 1952 when it was closed to keep out curious children.

In the 1960's, the legend of the Miller Mine was brought to the attention of a local gold mine buff, Walter Goetz, who set out to explore the mine. However, the only accessible tunnel was completely filled with water, and no attempt was made to enter the tunnel.

Interestingly, until 1977, Mr. Miller's daughter, Mary Uranium Miller Hymes, was still living on the Miller Mine property in an old cabin. A second home on the wooded hill

was occupied by William Dunbar Darcey, nephew of Mrs. Hymes and grandson of Miller the miner. In 1981, Mr. Darcey recounted to Washingtonian reporters that in the "mining days" he could hear neighbors chipping away at the quartz rocks at night, hoping to find some gold. **He told of builders appropriating some of the rock removed from the tunnels by the miners, and that at least a few Woodhaven homes have fireplaces made of gold ore from the mine.**

Mrs. Hymes and Mr. Darcey sold the property to Sheldon and Robert Blitz in 1977. The Blitz Brothers, as they were known to Woodhaven, planned to build 15 homes on the wooded hillside. When the Blitz Brothers did not believe the story of the mine, a bulldozer was brought in to open the entrance. **After a flood of water poured out, an arched mine tunnel, six feet wide and nine feet tall, was found that extended under the Landon administrative building, onward beneath Landon's fields and toward Bradley Boulevard. There were side tunnels off the main tunnel; some of them honey combing Woodhaven.** A 65 foot air shaft was located that was sunk vertically into the hill. An ore car was also found inside the mine tunnel.

In the end, the development was not permitted, except for a strip of land below the mine property where four homes were constructed (8301, 8303, 8305, and 8309 Whittier Boulevard). The sealed entrance to the mine is located on a steep bank in the backyard of 8301 Whittier Boulevard. The Landon School bought the remainder of the land to block further development attempts.

(Information for this piece was obtained from the following sources: Montgomery County Gold Fever, Walter A. Goetz, 1988, Bethesda, A Social History of the Area Through World War Two, William Offutt, "Striking It Rich," The Washingtonian, 1981)

To Dr. and Mrs. Paul Levine, 8317 Woodhaven Blvd. Bethesda, MD.

Dear Mimi and Paul:

I was distressed to learn from Mimi that a new owner proposes to demolish the house at 8501 Woodhaven for the purpose of building two new houses at the site. As you, my former neighbors well know, that house was our home from 1969 to 1988 and was where we raised our two daughters, Tanya and Sara.

We originally selected the Woodhaven home because of the unique character of the neighborhood and the totally appealing character of the Tudor-style home on the corner of Whittier and Woodhaven Blvd. The unique character to which I refer directly stemmed from the architectural design efforts of a Mr. Dein sometime, as I recall, in the late 1930s. Architect Dein designed and oversaw the construction of 50 or so Tudor-style homes, none identical but all sharing common features of design and style and, importantly, all respecting and preserving the existence of mature oak trees so abundant in the area.

Because I was in the Foreign Service, we lived there intermittently between assignments in India, the Philippines and Egypt. During those absences, the home served as our domestic "anchor" both physically and emotionally. It was always a delight to return to the home and the splendid community of Woodhaven home owners who gave the neighborhood its special common spirit.

You mentioned a possible effort to have the area designated an historic district. In that endeavor, I wish you and other neighbors every success. Of course, it never occurred to any of us that someone would purchase what has to be the premier property in the neighborhood for the purpose of demolishing it to build two more houses! Consequently, although we very likely could have achieved historic district status years ago, it just never seemed a possibility that we would be confronted with what amounts to a flagrant desecration of the neighborhood's physical character and uniqueness.

As everyone knows, there are plenty of relatively undistinguished housing areas in Bethesda where a developer undertaking demolition and upgrading would make sense. Woodhaven is not such a place!

I would urge you to share these views with members of the Montgomery Planning Commission, the MNCPPC and others in position to prevent this action from taking place.

Good luck and thanks for alerting me to this problem. Sincerely, Lenni

Lenni W. Kangas, 1630 Sunrise Drive NE, Solon, Iowa 52333; Tel. (319) 841-5090

8505 Woodhaven Boulevard
Bethesda, MD 20817

October 26, 2003

Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RE: Historic Resource Public Hearing
8501 Woodhaven Boulevard #35/153-1

Members of the Board:

As residents of the Woodhaven Neighborhood, we are writing to express our strong support for the proposal to designate 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard on the County's Master Plan for Historic Preservation. We deeply appreciate the prior actions of the Planning Board and of the Historic Preservation Commission to set aside this home for consideration, and we urge you to take all necessary further steps to secure this residence and the surrounding neighborhood from irresponsible and destructive development.

All of us in the community feel that this home and the Woodhaven neighborhood are something special -- a thematically unified "village" of over fifty English romantic revival homes set apart by their stone walls, towering trees, and spacious lawns and gardens. The home at 8501 is set squarely in the geographical center of the neighborhood at the crucial intersection of Woodhaven and Whittier Boulevards. It stands atop a hill that dominates the surrounding homes and establishes the essential architectural character of the Woodhaven community. It and the other homes at that intersection define, in effect, our village green.

Destruction of this absolutely pivotal home -- and its replacement by two outsized luxury houses -- would deeply scar the entire neighborhood. It would drastically reduce the value of any action that the HPC and this Board may subsequently take to designate and protect the remaining neighborhood.

There is a charm, craftsmanship, and even whimsy in the Dein homes that is unique in our experience of the Montgomery County suburbs. It is not a random assortment of houses, but a unified community of homes built on single, remarkably consistent architectural theme. That theme nevertheless allows for each home an individuality of design and style that creates that rarest of commodities in today's suburban construction -- a neighborhood with character.

This home, with its commanding position in the community, is in many ways the linchpin of Philip Dein's vision for the Woodhaven streetscape. To destroy this central house and to erect in its place two ponderous McMansions built on an entirely different scale would destroy in one stroke the continuity and proportion that were central to Dein's original vision.

Our community is moving as quickly as possible to consider and assemble a formal application to designate the Woodhaven neighborhood as a whole as an historic district. But that effort will be fundamentally undermined at the outset if this absolutely central and leading structure is demolished before a district application can even get off the ground. The developer's insistence on destroying this home immediately makes it essential to act now to protect the house and the surrounding neighborhood that it dominates.

The Woodhaven community is an architectural treasure that we feel a deep obligation to preserve and pass on to succeeding generations in this county. We ask for your support in beginning our effort by protecting this pre-eminent home from destruction.

Sincerely,

JOHN AND JAMIE DONELAN

**BEFORE THE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
STATEMENT ON 8501 WOODHAVEN BOULEVARD**

JOHN F. DONELAN, JR.

September 25, 2003

Good afternoon. My name is John Donelan, and my wife Jamie and I live at 8505 Woodhaven Boulevard, directly across Alcott Road from the home under consideration today. I very much appreciate this opportunity to appear before you and to express my strong support for the recommendation of the staff and Council members of the HPC that 8501 Woodhaven be placed on the Locational Atlas. As Kate Stevenson has stated very eloquently, this home is the geographically central and leading example in the neighborhood of the unique and beautifully crafted English Tudor homes that Philip Dein constructed in Woodhaven sixty years ago. But for the action of the Historic Preservation Commission and this Board, this home will be demolished on or soon after October 8, and any chance of fully preserving the architectural and environmental character of this exceptional neighborhood will be destroyed with it.

Events have overtaken us quickly. Our neighborhood citizens' association is acting as rapidly as it can under its bylaws and regulations to consider a petition for designation of the neighborhood as a whole as an historic district. In the interim, I and other concerned neighbors will be submitting an application of our own for review and designation of the neighborhood. But we need time to assemble an appropriate submission, and destruction of this central and dominating home on October 8 would

fundamentally compromise -- at the very outset -- what protection for the neighborhood would be designed to achieve.

Some have asked why residents did not act earlier to secure historic protection for the neighborhood. I can only plead that we enjoyed a sixty year tradition among our neighbors of respecting Woodhaven's distinctive architectural themes in modifying their homes and properties, and so did not realize that legal protection for the neighborhood might be necessary. Certainly none of us imagined that anyone would choose to completely obliterate a beautiful home and its magnificent trees and replace them with hulking new structures out of all scale and proportion to their surroundings.

In turn in this transaction, careful steps were taken to insure that neighbors would not know of the seller's and the developer's plans for this property, and so would not have an opportunity to respond early on and to explore historical protection on a more timely basis.

In any event, we are keenly aware now of the threat that this home and this neighborhood face from irresponsible development, and are firmly determined to take action. 8501 and the neighborhood that surrounds it are an irreplaceable architectural legacy -- something that, once destroyed and lost, can never be restored. This beautiful, shaded English village, with its stone walls and timbered ceilings, is a testament to an architect's vision and to old-world artistry and craftsmanship that are worth preserving for future generations in this county. I join with my neighbors here today in asking that you protect this home and help us preserve the community to which it belongs.

Thank you.

DATE: October 26, 2003

TO: Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission
1109 Spring Street
Suite 801
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Attention: Gwen Marcus Wright

FROM: Heather Birnie, Ph.D. *Heather Birnie*
Warren Strober, M.D. *Warren Strober*
8301 Whittier Boulevard
Bethesda, MD 20817-3124

SUBJECT: 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard

As residents of the Woodhaven neighborhood of Bethesda, we are writing in support of placing the home located at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

8501 Woodhaven Boulevard is a singularly unique property. With its prominent location, distinctive architectural style and historic significance, 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard is one of the grandest homes in this unique neighborhood. To allow demolition of this property would destroy much of the character of one of Montgomery County's finest neighborhoods. We urge the members of the Historic Preservation Commission to not let this happen.

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Commission
Dear Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board

October 26, 2003

We are writing to protest the proposed destruction of 8501 Woodhaven Blvd. in Bethesda and request that it be added to the master plan for preservation.

First, we have lived in Woodhaven just up the street at 8317 Woodhaven Blvd. since 1969 and have always felt that this was a beautiful community that would always be a source of pride to the residents. We raised three children here, the youngest being born here, and in fact our youngest plans to take over our house with his new wife in the future so that they can raise a family here. Indeed we have a long term concern for our neighborhood.


Second, the house that is targeted for destruction is a beautiful home that we have visited many times, and our good friend and former neighbor, Lenni Kangas, is sending a letter as to the feelings of this former owner regarding his beautiful home being a teardown.

There are a number of reasons why this house should be preserved and added to the master plan for preservation. First, the character of this community and houses built by Mr. Dein (he himself occupied the first such house he built) are an unusual example of architecture, Tudor style, that is more than 50 years old. All of us who occupy these houses are proud of the care given by the residents and we attract the admiration of all who visit us. We have had many inquires from real estate agents and private individuals looking for a Woodhaven house to buy. 8501 Woodhaven occupies a central place in the community and its destruction will lead inevitably to the loss of the character of Woodhaven. Also very relevant is the unfortunately growing disease of greed which is obviously not only restricted to certain company CEOs, and is manifest by developers in erecting huge border to border mega-mansions without any concern of the character of the neighboring houses. The sale and purchase of 8501 Woodhaven Blvd. was done secretly because the owner and the developer knew that there would be an outcry if anyone suspected that two large houses would be constructed in the place where one comfortably is situated. The teardown phenomenon, well described in the real estate section of the Washington Post October 25, 2003, is not limited to the Washington area but is particularly popular in Bethesda, Chevy Chase and Potomac. There is no doubt that the destruction of 8501 Woodhaven and the building of two homes on this property would destroy the lynch pin of the community and mark the destruction of a historical group of homes as an entity that has been treasured for more than 50 years. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of Woodhaven in the mid eighties and former residents came from near and far to mark this occasion that has meant so much to all of us. We have a treasury of information including the use of one of the houses by a neighbor as a community library during World War II because gas was in such short supply, and many decades of Father's Day picnics held by our first neighbors in 8319 Woodhaven for many years before it began to be rotated, several of these major events being at 8501 Woodhaven.

This planned destruction has taken us completely by surprise and has awakened us from our complacent belief that Woodhaven's character would remain unaltered. We now urgently request that you prevent the irreparable damage to our community, which can be accomplished still allowing the new owner a profit...albeit not the windfall he has been targeting. Our roots in the community are almost as deep as those of the stately trees that give Woodhaven its name. The two of us have served as President, Vice-President, Newsletter Chairman, Hospitality Chairman and in many other capacities over the years, and just as the destruction of 8501 will undoubtedly lead to the loss of some of the beautiful trees that have been there for decades, if not centuries, we are concerned that the entire fabric of our unique community will also crumble. We should set a good example for our youth by not disposing of a perfectly wonderful home and all the materials in its construction.

We hope that you will respond to our plea.

Sincerely,
Paul and Mimi Levine



Paul Levine, MD
Mimi Levine

EILEEN P. NEWMAN
6309 Alcott Road
Bethesda, MD 20817
301-365-0009
eileennewman@olg.com

October 25, 2003

Historic Preservation Commission
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
c/o Gwen Marcus Wright

Dear Members of the Commission,

I am writing in support of placing the property at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard in Bethesda on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

As a Woodhaven resident and a dog owner for 20 years, I walk by this property several times a day. The joy of living in this neighborhood and walking my dog comes in part from looking at the surroundings and the beauty of the neighborhood. This particular house is in the center of the neighborhood at its major crossroads; it sets the tone for the whole community. Its presence is commanding. The house is on a large lot elevated above street level and not surrounded by other houses. Its additions and improvements have been constructed to preserve the original architectural style and its historical significance. Demolition would destroy that history and encourage similar activity in Woodhaven and Montgomery County. There are many new neighborhoods and houses being built in the area that afford homeowners larger, more modern floor plans, for those who are attracted to this architectural style.

Second, at stake is the safety of the neighborhood. Demolishing the house and thereby allowing two houses to be built on the land would add a driveway and perhaps on street parking along Whittier Blvd (or perhaps worse along Woodhaven) adjacent to the very busy and dangerous intersection of Whittier and Woodhaven. Currently this intersection is overtaxed with traffic for a residential neighborhood, as it is a major cut through for commuters, school buses, and trucks to River Road and Bradley Boulevard. This intersection also serves as a bus stop for school buses. Additional vehicles would jeopardize the safety of children and all pedestrians. In addition large houses on these small lots on traffic congested streets would also demand privacy. This would necessitate new landscaping and perhaps fencing in the lots, thereby reducing the visibility at the intersection and eliminating the 3 foot pedestrian clearance along Woodhaven Boulevard that was obtained only 2 years ago when the hedge was moved back from the curb. This small change has improved the safety of children walking to school and to the bus stop, and all residents and pets walking around the neighborhood and to the Metrobus stop on Bradley Boulevard.

For the above reasons, I urge you to place this property on the Master Plan for Historical Preservation. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Eileen P. Newman



John V. Lanterman, FASA

Fellow, American Society of Appraisers
 Accredited Senior Appraiser

October 25, 2003

Chair Derick Berlage
Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Chair Berlage:

This letter concerns the plan to demolish the home at 8501 Woodhaven Blvd. We, among many others, are opposed to this plan.

Of some fifty Tudor style properties in the Woodhaven area that particular property has been and is a focal point on a central and busy intersection of the community.

Woodhaven Blvd literally bisects the community. The house under discussion faces that roadway; if demolished the plan, as I was advised by developer Stinson, is to replace it with two homes. These would be placed back to back each facing side streets entering Woodhaven Blvd thus the backyards would be visible to those using this main artery.


Additionally, I live directly across from 8501 and for 52 years have had a view of a lovely Tudor style home maintained on a well manicured landscape. I don't relish the possibility of having the rear yards of two new homes as future scenery.

The area was started by Mr. Philip Dein in 1936. His early and continuing efforts until his death in 1963 created an atmosphere of congeniality and camaraderie that had blossomed and continues to this day. I knew him and he was proud to be known as the honorary mayor of his creation.

The Woodhaven families are close knit. We have had Father's Day picnics for over 60 years, December Holiday events (for a longer period) to include pageants and gifts for the children as well as periodic neighborhood social events. Former neighbors returned from around the country for a well attended 50th Anniversary celebration in 1986.

We ask that the plan to demolish 8501 Woodhaven Blvd be denied.

Sincerely,


John V. Lanterman
Colonel, US Army (Ret)


Barbara S. Lanterman

S O U T H E R N
F I E L D O F F I C E



NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION

September 25, 2003

VIA FAX 301-495-1320

Mr. Derick P. Berlage
Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard, Bethesda

Dear Chairman Berlage:

I am writing on behalf of the National Trust to urge the Planning Board to affirm the September 24 recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission by adding to Montgomery County's *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* the Tudor Revival-style residence at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard, which was built in 1936 by Philip H. Dein and is now threatened by demolition. Mr. Dein was responsible for the development, between 1936 and 1954, of many of the fifty-six homes in the park-like Woodhaven neighborhood, which appears to be eligible for inclusion as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Trust provides leadership, education and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Its Washington, DC headquarters staff, six regional offices and twenty-one historic sites work with the Trust's quarter-million members and thousands of local community groups in all fifty states.

Maryland is an acknowledged leader in the nation's historic preservation movement. To its credit, Maryland has earned a reputation as an excellent steward of its irreplaceable historic resources, from Colonial homes to busy Main Streets. Here, listing in the *Locational Atlas* would be the first step toward the long-term protection of a prominent residence and, perhaps more importantly, the preservation of an established neighborhood's unique character.

Protecting the Irreplaceable



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Traditionally, the National Trust does not take a position with regard to local designation decisions. Instead, we typically defer to expert panels with knowledge of local history and architecture, such as the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission. However, in this instance we offer our perspective, first, because 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard and the Woodhaven neighborhood are worthy of preservation and, second, because the demolition permit filed by the owner of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard raises the nationally significant issue of “teardowns.”

Unfortunately, the unnecessary demolition of homes in historic and architecturally distinctive residential neighborhoods is occurring in cities and towns all over America – from fashionable resorts such as Palm Springs to the techno-boom towns around Seattle and the commuter suburbs outside Washington and Chicago. The trend has become so alarming that the National Trust added “Teardowns in Historic Neighborhoods” to our 2002 list of America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places as a means of calling national attention to this disturbing phenomenon that has taken many communities by surprise.

Teardowns destroy more than houses. Neighborhood livability is diminished as trees are removed, backyards are eliminated, and sunlight is blocked by bulky new structures built right up to the property lines. Economic and social diversity often are reduced as costly new mansions replace more affordable houses – including the modest “starter homes” that our parents knew and that first-time homebuyers still search for today. The ironic result is that teardowns wind up destroying the very qualities that made the neighborhood attractive to newcomers in the first place.

In some instances, teardowns may be acceptable. Replacing outdated and inefficient structures is necessary if a community is to remain economically viable. But in recent years the pace of teardowns has reached runaway proportions. In some communities, it has become a near orgy of irrational destruction, reminiscent of the widespread demolition that scarred so many communities in the heyday of urban renewal during the 1950s and 60s.

Sadly, the destruction of a historic house is only the beginning of the problems caused by teardowns. It’s not uncommon for a demolished older home to be replaced with a new one that is much bigger than any other house on the block. These structures loom over their neighbors and break the established building patterns of the area. Front yards are often given over to driveways, and three- or four-car garages are the dominant elements in the façade. Floorplans are often oriented to private interior spaces, making the new houses look like fortresses that stand totally aloof from their surroundings.

Apart from their visual impact, teardowns can profoundly alter a neighborhood’s economic and social environment. In some neighborhoods, teardowns may cause property taxes to rise – and while this increase may be a good thing for communities in search of added revenue, it can drive out moderate-income or fixed-income residents.

September 25, 2003

Page 3

The domino effect of teardowns may lead residents to feel that they've lost control of the neighborhood to developers and speculators.

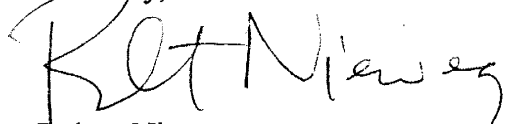
Eventually, the sheer number of teardowns may cause sale prices of the remaining older houses to plateau or even decline. A house that once might have been praised as "charming and historic" now gets marketed as "older home on expansive lot." Once that happens – once the value of an old house is perceived to be less than that of the land it's built on – the house's days are probably numbered. And sadly, the neighborhood's days as a viable historic enclave may be numbered too.

It doesn't have to be this way. There are alternatives to teardowns. The challenge is to manage new investment so that it respects the character and distinctiveness that made neighborhoods like Woodhaven so desirable in the first place. Across the country, growing numbers of communities are developing and using a variety of planning and preservation tools to put the brakes on teardowns. Some of these tools, like Montgomery County's *Locational Atlas*, work to protect existing buildings from demolition or insensitive alteration. Others encourage new construction that respects the neighborhood instead of wrecking it. Information on these tools – and additional background on the teardowns epidemic – is contained in a special report by the National Trust which is available at www.nationaltrust.org/11Most/2002/TeardownsReport_ExecSumm.pdf

Therefore, in light of the historic and architectural character of 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard and the Woodhaven neighborhood, and the potential benefits to the broader community of protecting this home and its neighborhood against unnecessary demolition and incompatible redevelopment, we encourage the Planning Board to add 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard to the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*.

Thank you in advance for considering the views of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Sincerely,



Robert Nieweg
Director, Southern Field Office
National Trust for Historic Preservation

*Katherine Rettke
Woodhaven Citizens Association
8204 Woodhaven Boulevard
Bethesda, Maryland 20817-3176
Telephone: 301/365-5221
Fax: 301/365-5221*

September 25, 2003

VIA Facsimile: 301/563-3412

Ms. Susan Valasquez
Chair, Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Velasquez:

I am writing to you regarding the letter you have received from Robert Nieweg of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This letter asks that the commission initiate a historic district evaluation for the Woodhaven neighborhood.


We as a community are strongly in support of saving the house at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard. This house is significant on its own merits within the context of this community. 8501 Woodhaven is the visual focal point of our street. The loss of this one house will take away from us the atmosphere and ambience of our entire street.

It is very important to me that our residents have a say in any historic designation for a grouping of houses. The house at 8501 Woodhaven is so important on its own merits that tearing down this house will likely take away the choice of our residents to pursue historic district evaluation in the future. If this one house is lost there will be little of the original feel and character of the street left to save.

In regard to initiating a historic district evaluation for the Woodhaven neighborhood, the residents of this neighborhood have neither adequately discussed nor expressed an informed opinion on the issue of community designation. It is important that our citizens, and especially those citizens living in homes which would fall under the designation, have the opportunity to vote on this topic before our association speaks either in favor or against such a request.

Citizens have expressed great interest and in learning more about what a historic district designation would mean for our community. It is understandable that a single house designation would be made with the plan to seriously consider the option of a historic district. Because there has not yet been a vote among our citizens about pursuing this course of action, the initiation of a historic district evaluation at this time for more than one house is not representative of the Woodhaven Citizen's Association.

Respectfully,


Katherine Rettke
President

September 24, 2003

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Historic Preservation Section
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Re: Application for Addition to the Locational Atlas #35-153-1, 8501 Woodhaven Blvd, Bethesda, Demolition Permit Pending

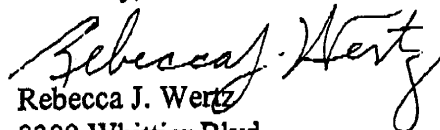
Dear Ms. Corri Jimenez :

I strongly support the addition of the house at 8501 Woodhaven Blvd., Bethesda to the Locational Atlas and Index of Historical Sites, scheduled for consideration at the HPC's work session on September 24, 2003.

I live at 8309 Whittier Blvd., and have been a resident of the Woodhaven community since 1999. The property in question is recognized as the focal point of this unique neighborhood. It sits on a knoll at the cross-roads of the community, overlooking Woodhaven's central intersection. Its prominent siting, excellent condition, and mature landscaping make it stand out as a signature house reflecting the character of this old neighborhood. I, like so many residents, was attracted to Woodhaven by the beautiful stone Tudor-revival homes that grace Woodhaven Blvd, and surrounding streets, of which 8501 is one of the oldest and finest examples. The historical information in the file concerning the origins of the dwelling and the neighborhood also strongly supports the historic designation of this home.

I urge the Commission to grant the request for designation to ensure that this neighborhood landmark is not destroyed. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 301-767-9779.

Sincerely,



Rebecca J. Wertz
8309 Whittier Blvd.
Bethesda, MD 20817

*Woodhaven Citizens Association
Katherine Rettke, President
8204 Woodhaven Boulevard
Bethesda, Maryland 20817-3176
Telephone: 301/365-5221*

September 11, 2003

Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, Maryland 21032

To Whom it May Concern:

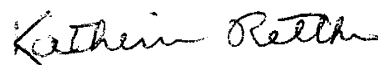
The Woodhaven Citizens Association is a collection of residents and property owners in the Woodhaven subdivision in Bethesda. We strongly support efforts being made by our members to obtain historic designation for the house at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard, which has recently been sold to a developer who plans to demolish the house.

This house and those surrounding it were built between 1936 and 1954 by a single developer (Philip Dein) who sought to establish a style and character to the community by selecting a traditional American revival style. The houses are made mostly of stone, and when viewed together create a unique neighborhood style. The developer perhaps sought to establish a look and character to the community which would call to mind the friendly relationship between America and Great Britain, or perhaps he simply chose a popular style in American residential design. In any event, the prominent placement of the house at 8501 Woodhaven Boulevard on a rise overlooking the street makes it the focal point of the entire neighborhood.

Over the years, residents have moved into this neighborhood because of the appeal of the charming stone houses, the topography, the old-growth trees and the relationship of the houses to one another. The tearing down of this particular house would be devastating to the look and feel of the neighborhood. We believe this house is historic in character and contains the elements that make it worthy of historic designation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Katherine Rettke, President
Woodhaven Citizens Association

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