

Testimony before the Historic Preservation Commission  
February 27, 2008

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**Testimony and Power Point presentation  
Mary Reardon, Preservation Chair, Silver Spring Historical Society  
Master Plan Amendment, Falkland Apartments  
Historic Preservation, February 27, 2008**

In hearings before this body and the Planning Board, I believe that we and our supporters have demonstrated beyond doubt the historical and architectural significance of the Falkland Apartment complex as a whole.

It's not surprising that the owner would have you limit the designation of Falkland to the parcels they have no plans to redevelop. The owner has argued unsuccessfully that the north parcel is less significant than the other two. His attorney even claimed before the Planning Board that the ROAD along East Falkland Lane is the centerpiece of the north parcel. I'm sure that claim would have amused the architect of Falkland.

To lose part of Falkland would not be a compromise. If someone can take something valuable from you but decides to take less, that's not a compromise. And sculpting a designation to accommodate a planned development is not the way the designation process is done.

Before showing slides, I'll touch on two issues that are not really relevant to your decision tonight but that may be on your minds. First, given the overwhelming need for affordable housing in the County, the net gain in affordable units the proposed redevelopment would provide is a pittance, especially weighed against mangling a valuable historic resource and disrupting a viable community. Second, while it's true the sector plan allows for redevelopment on the north parcel, that is not a MANDATE. The areas around transit hubs need not contain uninterrupted high rise development.

**16<sup>th</sup> St. slide:**

Tonight we're continuing a process begun 5 years ago when the historic inventory of downtown Silver Spring buildings opened the way for a review of all properties 50 years and older for potential designation

I want to remind you that the owner knew when he negotiated to purchase Falkland that this County inventory was underway. Falkland was the most likely of the properties to be designated as a result.

### **Site Plan Slide**

You can see how large the endangered north sector is, and how it fits into the overall design. Maryland Historical Trust is well aware of the loss of 34 of the 484 units on the Draper Triangle. Yet they have indicated that the property is eligible for National Register after we filed a nomination, and they sent a letter of support to the Planning Board urging local designation.

### **Supporter slides (first 2)**

At the hearing before the Planning Board on December 6, there were numerous speakers, and numerous letters were sent to the Board. Our supporters for Master Plan designation include county, state, and national preservation entities. Besides Silver Spring Historical Society, we have Montgomery Preservation, Inc., Historic Takoma, Preservation Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Art Deco Society of Washington, the DC Preservation League, and the Latrobe (DC) Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Preservationists in the District of Columbia realize Falkland's significance to the region.

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Civic groups testified for Master Plan listing: Montgomery County Civic Federation, Woodside Park Civic Association, Seven Oaks-Evanswood Civic Association, and the Civic League of North Portal Estates (a community just over the line in DC).

...and environmental groups: Maryland Native Plant Society, Sierra Club of Montgomery County, and the Audubon Naturalist Society.

And among our supporters are tenant activists whom the Planning Board also heard from.

### **Supporter slides (next 2)**

Leading experts on architecture and architectural history are calling for Master Plan listing of all of Falkland.

Richard Longstreth, Director of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at George Washington University, and one of the country's most prominent architectural historians.

Ralph Bennett and Isabelle Gournay, both professors of architecture and architectural history at the University of Maryland, both specialists in housing architecture. Bennett is former chair of the Housing Opportunities Commission.

James M. Goode, author of two major works on DC area architecture: *Best Addresses* and *Capital Losses*.

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Professor John Breihan of Loyola College, who is a consultant to Maryland Historical Trust. And planners Dorn McGrath and John Fondersmith.

### **Roosevelt slide**

There are three basic reasons for Falkland's significance.

First is its connection with the **New Deal**. Falkland was the **second apartment complex** in the country to be underwritten by the New Deal's Federal Housing Administration. These New Deal projects influenced suburban development.

Eleanor Roosevelt cut the ribbon when Falkland opened in 1937 to celebrate the success of this program for moderate income people, like those pouring into Washington to work on New Deal programs. The owner of Falkland likes to point out that she cut the ribbon on the *south* parcel, not the *north* parcel. But the north and west parcels were underway at the time. And James Blair, the developer, intended to have the project cover all three parcels, referring to them collectively as "Falkland Properties." It was ONE project.

### **Prototype slide**

Falkland and Colonial Village in Arlington were among the DC-area models for middle-income apartments nationally, over the next generation. This is from the *Washington Post*, 1937.

Falkland is at the top. Falkland was indeed a prototype.

### **Sunnyside slide**

The second reason for Falkland's significance was that it's part of a proud line of early multifamily projects that adopted the English Garden City principles as imported by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright. Generous green space and low-rise construction were key components, ensuring that relatively dense housing was nevertheless pleasant.

Sunnyside Gardens in Queens was the first such project. All of these developments I'll show you are on the National Register, even though all made allowances for automobiles over the years, as Falkland did. Sunnyside starts about 2 blocks from an el stop about 20 minutes outside Manhattan.

### **Radburn slide**

Radburn in New Jersey is another.

All of these early projects were built in stages, as Falkland was. But no one considers any parts less important than others, nor would anyone suggest the parts are separate properties.

### **Chatham Village slide**

In Chatham Village, the topography dominated the plan more than at the two others. It's more like Falkland in that regard. Chatham Village was named one of the 10 Great Neighborhoods for 2007 by the American Planning Association.

### **Colonial Village slide**

Close to home, we have Colonial Village, also on the National Register, and *it's* sandwiched between two metro stops. This was the first large scale rental housing project in the U.S. to be backed by FHA mortgage insurance, just before Falkland.

### **Falkland site plan**

Falkland's design was dictated by the topography, which is why every sector is unique. The architect, Louis Justement, said, for example, that he deliberately retained the y-shaped stream valley in the north and south sectors.

By the way, Falkland was widely celebrated in contemporary architectural journals, during and after construction. This is from the *Architectural Record*.

### **Picketing Slide**

The third reason for Falkland's significance is now part of its history. That is, literally generations of Silver Spring and County activists joined Falkland tenants to defend the site whenever it was threatened. The late Senator Ida Mae Garrott was among them. Here's a photo in the *Evening Star* from 1972. Their reasons for defending Falkland were to preserve affordable housing AND because of its architectural and historic merit. And people from the close-in DC neighborhoods joined in, petitioning the County Council to spare Falkland.

### **Aerial slide**

The green space in Falkland is a major asset. This aerial view is from 1955, but the same abundant green space and tree cover exist today, throughout Falkland. Falkland and Jesup Blair Park together comprise the last significant stands of native trees and green space in downtown Silver Spring.

### **Slide of Falkland green areas**

Wherever you live in Falkland you can look out and see trees. And the buildings facing major streets are set back with grassy frontage. At left is the stream bed on the north parcel.

### **Next 3 slides of Falkland buildings**

#### ***First slide***

In these next 3 slides I want to point out that Falkland, though its buildings contain a variety of detailing, has an integrated design on all 3 parcels. None is less significant than the other. This is a mix of photos from all 3 parcels. These doorways on the north parcel exemplify some architectural details.

#### ***Next slide***

These are buildings on the south and north parcels

#### ***Next slide***

At right is a building on the north parcel's East Falkland Lane, on the side closest to the Metro station.

### **First Justement slide**

The architect of Falkland, Louis Justement, designed several landmark buildings in DC. Harvard Hall and 2120 Kalorama Road are in James M. Goode's book *Best Addresses*.

### **Second Justement slide**

The Federal Courthouse is National Register eligible. The Longworth building is called one of the best examples of neo-classical revival in Washington.

### **Third Justement slide**

Justement's Harris and Ewing Photograph Studio on F St. is on the National Register. Justement was part of a Princeton symposium in 1946 that included Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Robert Moses, and Phillip Johnson—luminaries in the world of architecture and planning.

### **Housing slide**

Finally, we are not desperate for housing to enliven the CBD. Not relevant to tonight's discussion, but worth mentioning.

We counted nearly 3600 units recently approved, under construction, or recently completed (since 2003). And there are nearly 1500 units proposed, not counting Falkland.

That would bring the total since 2003 to over 5000 units.

### **16<sup>th</sup> Street slide**

Both the HPC and the Planning Board have voted that all of Falkland is eligible for inclusion on the Master Plan. We urge you to take the logical next step tonight and recommend amending the Master Plan to designate the entire property.

Falkland Historic Designation Hearing Before Planning Board, December 6, 2007

Louis Justement, Architect

Statement by Marcie Stickle, Silver Spring Historical Society Advocacy Chair, 12/6/07

The extraordinary expertise of architect and progressive city planner Louis Justement continues to be unearthed, new information revealed. Extensive research has been carried out about this exceptional architect and the New Deal Falkland Garden Apartments over the last 20 years:

(1) Andrea Rebeck, registered and restoration architect, calls Justement an architectural "master" in her 1987 "Montgomery County in the Early Twentieth Century, A Study of Historical and Architectural Themes," completed for the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and the Maryland Historical Trust, 12/87. She was engaged to survey the County and bring the Locational Atlas into the 20th Century. She places Justement in the same company as Frank Lloyd Wright and John Ebersson, of "national prominence" ("Theme VI: C. Important Buildings, or Works by "Masters," p. 30). She recommends The Falkland's placement on the National Register.

"He developed a design which combined masterful site planning with a novel mixture of townhouse units placed among apartment blocks. The success of this project encouraged a number of similar developments in the Southern portion of the County" . . . p. 10.

Andrea Rebeck also states: "The first garden apartment complex in Montgomery County, and by far the largest and most ambitious, was the Falkland Apartments built in 1936-1938 by the Blair family on part of their former farm in Silver Spring. The Falkland's architect, Louis Justement, studied many projects for moderate income families, including Colonial Village in Arlington, Va., and Chatham Village near Pittsburgh."

Justement: "An existing Y-shaped valley has been carefully preserved and this has permitted the retention of practically every tree on the original site. The use of courts opening on the surrounding streets permits greater variety in appearance and a more economical use of the land, while providing the same density per acre as typical row housing. The preservation of existing trees provides privacy as well as agreeable surroundings. The living porches generally face the rear garden and there are play areas for small children," "New Cities for Old," pp. 140-141.

Justement won professional acclaim for his Falklands project.

(2) American Architects Directory, 1962, 2nd Edition, notes Falklands won an international award, an Honorable Mention from the Fifth Pan American Congress of Architects, 1940. Justement also designed Howard University Law School, Medical School, Administration Building; Sibley Memorial Hospital; the Meridian Hotel, which won an Award of Merit from the Washington Board of Trade, 1942. In 1921, won two out of three first prizes in the "National Own Your Own Home Competition." Admitted to AIA in 1921.



(3) "In 1946, he was one of only eight architects elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, the highest honor the profession can bestow on its peers," Karel Yasko, FAIA, Counselor for Fine Arts & Historic Preservation, and assistant commissioner for design and construction, General Services Administration, 10/84, letter to County Council.

"Previous to the award, the leading architectural magazine in 1938 in extensive coverage cited Falkland as a prime example of multiple housing in its concept and planning advances. Through these publications Falkland had a great influence on post-war housing planning, beyond the borders of Montgomery County."

"Within the architectural profession, he [Justement] was held in great esteem . . . and established a national reputation for his urban planning and housing," Karel Yasko, Ibid., 1984.

(4) Justement's 1952 E. Barrett Prettyman Federal (United States) Courthouse on Constitution Ave. is National Register eligible, and a contributing building to the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site, according to the Wash., D.C., Preservation Office, and the D.C. Preservation League, 3/28/05. The Pa. Ave. National Historic Site extends from Capitol Hill to the White House.

Justement's Federal Courthouse is also on the General Services Administration Fine Arts & Arts Commissions' Historic Properties List, National Capital Region. Prettyman Courthouse is included in an American Institute for Architects Guidebook.

Justement was awarded the contract for the design, drawing and specification preparation of the new Courthouse in 1945; Harry Truman laid its cornerstone in June 1950, according to the Federal Courthouse Web site:

"On September 5, 1945, the Commissioner of Public Buildings awarded a contract to local architect Louis Justement for the design, drawing and specification preparation of the new courthouse. The District of Columbia officially deeded Reservation 10 to the federal government in 1949. Louis Justement generally conformed to the stripped classical styles and massing of the surrounding buildings, but the spacial arrangements and site planning for the E. Barrett Prettyman Federal Courthouse differed from its neighbors. New technologies, such as fluorescent lighting and air conditioning, allowed Louis Justement to abandon the previous structures' courtyard plan-type, and arrange rooms within a large, continuous floor plate. Louis Justement's work was approved on January 14, 1948, and ground was broken in August of 1949. On June 27, 1950, the first day of the Korean War, President Harry S. Truman laid the cornerstone, and the building opened in November of 1952."

(5) Justement's Harris & Ewing Photographic Studio, is on the National Register, 1311-1313 F St., N.W., D.C., 1900-1924, in Renaissance style, added 1994. At that time of his design, he was junior partner of Sonneman & Justement.

(6) Justement designed the Longworth House Office Building on Capitol Hill in 1933.

(7) Photographs of Justement's D.C. bridges are in the prestigious Historic

**American Buildings Survey and Historic American Engineering Record Collection, since 1933**, at the Library of Congress, in the "Built in America Collection." <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query>. Bridges he designed:

- a. K Street Bridge, Spanning Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway, Washington, D.C.
- b. Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, Spanning Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway, Washington, DC.

HABS/HAER collections document achievements in architecture, engineering, and design in the United States and its territories through a comprehensive range of building types and engineering technologies.

(8) Photograph of a Justement's winning House design ("Own Your Home Competition") for "Own A Home Exposition, Inc.," 1920 or 1921, in Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Collection.

(9) **Photographs of Justement's works are in architect Arthur Heaton's LOC collection**; they were colleagues in the Washington Renovise movement of the 1930s. "Architectural drawing for a model house ("exhibition house") for the "Renovize Washington Campaign," Washington, D.C. (Heaton was first supervising architect of Washington National Cathedral, designed National Geographic buildings, Washington, D.C., National Dry Cleaning Institute, Silver Spring.)

(10) **31 of Justement's works are photographed and featured within the Library of Congress extensive collection of renowned photographer Theodore Horydczak, 1890-1971, in "Washington as It Was, 1923 to 1959," of architecture and social life of the Washington metropolitan area.**

Justement used Horydczak's aerial photograph of the "Falklands," and Fort Dupont Houses, in his book, "New Cities for Old." See: Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/thhtml/thhome.html>

(11) See: [www.architectureweek.com/2001/0829/classic\\_home.html](http://www.architectureweek.com/2001/0829/classic_home.html)

"Architecture Week," Page H1, 29 August 2001, Features Justement's "Classic Home" on first page of its Web site, to advertise "500 Small Houses of the Twenties," 1990 edition, Dover Publications, currently being sold on Amazon.com, and elsewhere, compiled from original "The Books of a Thousand Homes," 1923.

"Garden side overview of Classic Home 002, designed by Louis Justement, architect: This plan indicates a dwelling somewhat like a compact four-room house, but providing considerably more living space. Exterior construction is straightforward stucco, and the use of Spanish-type garden walls is indicated as adding considerably to the size and architectural effect of the house. On the first floor there is a dining room, where the four room house would just have an alcove, and upstairs is a cozy deck." From "500 Small Houses of the Twenties," compiled by Henry Atterbury Smith, from "The Books of a Thousand Homes," copyright 1923. The 1990 edition is published by Dover Publications, ISBN 0-486-26300-2.

(12) **George Washington University Gelman Library contains Justement's manuscripts as a "major holding."**

(13) Author James Goode's photographs in the LOC collection for his book **"Best Addresses: A Century of Washington's Distinguished Apartment Houses"** (Smithsonian, 1988), include **Justement's Harvard Hall Apartments, 1928, first standard apartment with indoor swimming pool, in Adams Morgan, D.C., and other Justement works, along with those of other exceptional architects.**

From 1988 until 1989, James Goode had a special "Best Addresses" exhibit at The Building Museum, Wash., D.C.

Enclosure:

**AIA Press Release Upon Louis Justement Attaining AIA Fellow Status, 1946, Before he had designed the Federal Courthouse and other works:**

Louis Justement, Washington, D.C. Chapter

**Admitted to the Institute in 1921. Has made notable contributions to the profession of architecture, particularly in group housing. A pioneer in this field, his executed work bears eloquent testimony to his sensitive and thorough understanding of this problem and to his noteworthy ability as a designer. His writings and activities in the field of city planning have further increased his usefulness and effectiveness to the profession and the public. In recognition of his architectural achievements and of his extensive and valuable services to The Institute and the Washington Chapter, he has been advanced to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects.**

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See <http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/adecenter/essays/Scott.html> (house designs as models):

"In 1921 the Own a Home Exposition Company with offices in Chicago and New York sponsored a competition entitled 'Own Your Home Competition,' in which architects were invited to provide designs for modest suburban homes in four categories established according to materials. Washington architect Louis Justement won first prizes for his four-room frame Colonial cottage as well as his house constructed with metal lath, back plaster and stucco (ADE - UNIT 2879, no 17 A size). His entry for a six-room stucco cottage earned a mention . . . ."

It is important to note that the Planning Board in 2003 said that for Locational Atlas for Historic Properties designation **"it's either the Falkland or the Saint Charles (Garden) Apartments"**; in 2003 the Planning Board decided that the entire Falklands should be placed on the Locational Atlas. Sadly, we just recently lost the St. Charles and its environmental setting, including a huge catalpa tree green home to the residents' beloved mocking bird.

*Marcie Stickle SSHS Advocacy Chair  
8515 Greenwood Ave, #8 Silver Spring MD 20912  
301 585 3817*

My name is Jane Bergwin-Rand and I am a current resident of Falkland-Chase Apartments and have previously submitted copies of over 50 signatures of other Falkland residents who, like me, are urging that the northern parcel of Falkland be saved from demolition by designating the entire Falkland complex as historic.

Having grown up in Montgomery County, I first discovered Falkland back in 1972 and lived in the SW segment. I rediscovered Falkland a few years ago on a visit here from Michigan where I had been living. I was absolutely thrilled to see the landmark Falkland buildings still standing and continuing to serve as a visual gateway to Maryland from D.C. I moved back to Falkland in November, 2006, this time in the North section. I truly felt I could come home again.

But sometime after I moved in I learned that part of Falkland, where I was living, was in danger of being demolished. Once I realized that this was not a done deal as I had been led to believe, I helped to gather tenant signatures in support of saving all of Falkland. Without exception, 100 percent of the residents I asked to sign the letter did so without hesitation.

The residents I spoke with love living at Falkland as it is and residents of the north parcel do not want to be forced to move. They chose Falkland for many reasons, including diversity of residents, green, open spaces and a sense of community. Falkland is a safe place where residents plant flowers and herb gardens and put carved pumpkins on the stone walls at Halloween. Even Home Properties' website touts Falkland as having "the unique extra...mature landscaping not found in most urban apartment communities." Ironic that Home Properties is willing to use the rarity of the setting as a selling point while preparing to obliterate the very same.

It simply does not seem to be logical to consider dismembering the Falkland complex, declaring one-third less historic and less important than the remaining two-thirds. When signing up to rent at Falkland there is nothing distinguishing the sections; all were designed by the same architect; and the north parcel not only is joined to the south by a streambed which runs under East-West Highway, but also by an underground tunnel still used by maintenance staff to get from one section to the other. Why, now would one section not be considered historic while the other two are? Why should the tenants and Falkland be the band aid for Montgomery County's affordable housing problem?

I urge you, The Historic Preservation Commission, on behalf of myself and the 50+ residents who signed the letter thus far, to please save all of the Falkland-Chase Apartments and designate the entire complex as an historic landmark so that the buildings will remain as the important part of Silver Spring that they have always been since Eleanor Roosevelt cut the opening ribbon in 1937.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OF FALKLAND-CHASE  
Mary Sinclair Jacobs, President, Charter House Residents Association, Inc.

**The truth never changes. It seems obvious we learn nothing from history.**

**Landmark proprieties are cornerstones** of a healthy informed society. Preservation is the trademark of sound business practices. Nine acres comprise the Falkland-Chase Property of family homes, gardens, trees, and a natural stream bed at the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Street in Silver Spring, Maryland at the opposite end of the White House of the United States of America. Every inch of the Falkland-Chase should be treated the same as the White House's 82 acres at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC because they share a rich history. The cornerstone for the White House was laid October 13, 1792 and the Falkland-Chase 1936-38. The White House stands gracefully as an example of preservation and retrofitting. We should learn something from history through preservation of precious housing stock that is soundly constructed.

**Displacement is a most traumatic experience.** In my opinion It ranks very close to being in a war zone or losing a love one. At 72 years old I was among the over 200 residents 55+ in age. who were displaced from The Charter House Apartment building on November 30, 2006. (The trauma still exists and it will not matter where I live.) Residents of The Charter House were fortunate to have the tax payers of Maryland to pick up most of the tab. We were also fortunate to be able to return to a building, known as our home; in spite of the over 290 code violations which are fixable. **Any resident that is displaced is homeless... is without a place to sit down, eat, bath, rest, or sleep with a peace of mind.** Now!

1. Does Parks and Planning have a plan in place to relocate the residents from Falkland-Chase?
2. Does Park and Planning have a financial plan available to house the displaced residents from Falkland-Chase?
3. Will Parks and Planning be responsible for and will pay for the displaced residents while the destruction and construction go forward?
4. Does Park and Planning have knowledge of a phase in plan program while construction is in progress?
5. Does Park and Planning have a plan in place for the residents who will return to qualify for an apartment at the same rate as to when they were forced to leave?
6. Can and will our utility system, that is; water, sewer, electricity be sufficient to handle more high-rise buldings in this congested area?

Our health is compromised from the air and noise pollution. Surrounding community shall inherit noise pollution, towering bricks, suffocating heat, blocked out sunlight, traffic jams, and inhalation of filthy unhealthy air from vehicular traffic jams. There is evidence that renovation is half the cost rather than tearing down starting from scratch. The horror of destroying this landmark property will not solve the availability nor affordability issues of rental housing by replacing it with a humpty-dumpty towering structure. An evacuation plan in this congested area is futile. **None so blind as one who will not see, except through greed-grounded lens.**

These same issues will be re-hashed 10 to 20 years before a different group of faces, unless some gut wrenching decision is made **now to stop the need to be a disposable society.** Let this well established safe and sound housing stock of bricks and white siding landmark known as the Falkland-Chase which stands at the opposite end of The White House of America on 16<sup>th</sup> Street continue to stand as the cornerstone for a wealthy neighborhood in Montgomery County, Silver Spring, MD. Thank you.

# Solving an Estate Investment Problem

By WILLIAM D. BLAIR

President, Falkland Properties, Inc.

IN SILVER SPRING, Maryland, adjacent to Washington, D. C., is the housing development known as Falkland Properties. The first section of the development, providing housing for 178 families, was completed last spring and is now 100 percent occupied. The second section, which will contain 301 family units, is now under construction and is expected to be ready for occupancy next spring.

As the representative of the Blair estate most closely associated with the planning, financing, and operation of this property, my experience may be of interest to others concerned with the investment of estate funds and the practical development of estate properties.

## *A problem in land utilization*

The Falkland project is essentially an attempt to solve a problem in land utilization. For more than a century successive generations of the Blair family have held extensive acreage in Montgomery County, Maryland, on the northern border of the District of Columbia. This land was bought not for speculation, but as a family plantation by Francis Preston Blair, my great-grandfather, who came to Washington as a newspaper editor during the administration of Andrew Jackson.

In recent years, with Washington expanding northward, Silver Spring has grown rapidly as a suburban community. A main traffic artery, Sixteenth Street NW., was improved to the edge of our property, and new boulevards running east and west cut through. The land had long since become unproductive as farm acreage, and although it continued to appreciate in value, mounting taxes and lack of earnings made it a considerable liability insofar as the estate income was concerned.

Several possible solutions presented themselves. One was outright sale of the land for cash. Another was sale of the property under a purchase-money mortgage to a real-estate developer. A third plan open to us was to develop the tract ourselves.

*Large-scale rental housing, as developed under the FHA program, offers some definite advantages as an investment for landed estates. Mr. Blair describes the problems of one such estate and how FHA-insured rental housing is solving them*

We were not experienced in land development, however, and we knew that it ordinarily involved considerable risk. Furthermore, we did not feel that the estate could afford to tie up the funds necessary to complete a development, and adequate mortgage financing appeared unobtainable.

But cash offers for the tract were far below its actual value, and while the offers of little cash and much mortgage approximated what we regarded as fair value, they would entail our loss of control of the land and at the same time subject us to the risks of development in the hands of others. Another disadvantage in either type of sale was the fact that we would be disposing of land which had appreciated rapidly in recent years and which, we believed, would continue to appreciate.

## *Own development most practical*

Weighing all these considerations, development of the tract ourselves appeared our most practical course. In studying how this might be accomplished we examined the experience of other estates which had developed land holdings either as exclusive residential areas or as subdivisions for moderate-priced homes.

One idea that we gave serious consideration called for developing part of the tract as a cooperative community for a group of Government employees. Very attractive preliminary plans were prepared by a Washington architect, but the plan finally fell through, largely because of the inability of the prospective cooperators to provide the equity funds necessary to support adequate mortgage financing.

Meanwhile, the National Housing Act had been passed and the Federal Housing Administration established. We became familiar with the Administration's insurance of loans to

*Insured Mortgage Portfolio  
IMP 2 (11.57)*

modernize houses, and with its insurance of mortgages on individual residential properties. But it did not occur to us that a mortgage on a large-scale rental property might also be insured under the terms of the Act.

In the spring of 1935, however, Washington newspapers carried the announcement that the Administration had approved a rental housing project, Colonial Village,<sup>1</sup> to be located in Arlington County, Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington, and had made a commitment to insure a mortgage loan advanced by a large insurance company.

That announcement at once started us on a new line of attack. The result is that we have transformed 24 acres of land, which 2 years ago were a liability to the Blair estate, into a community providing housing, completed or under construction, for 479 families. The rental income from the property, after substantial allowances for vacancies and rent losses, is calculated to be sufficient (1) to cover the cost of operation, taxes, interest on the mortgages, and other charges incidental to the financing; (2) to retire the mortgage debt in approximately 26 years; and (3) at the same time to provide an income of some \$30,000 a year for the holders of the equity in the property.

<sup>1</sup> See "Large-scale Housing as a Business", by Gustave Ring, President, Colonial Village, Inc., Vol. 1, No. 12, *INSURED MORTGAGE PORTFOLIO*.—Ed.

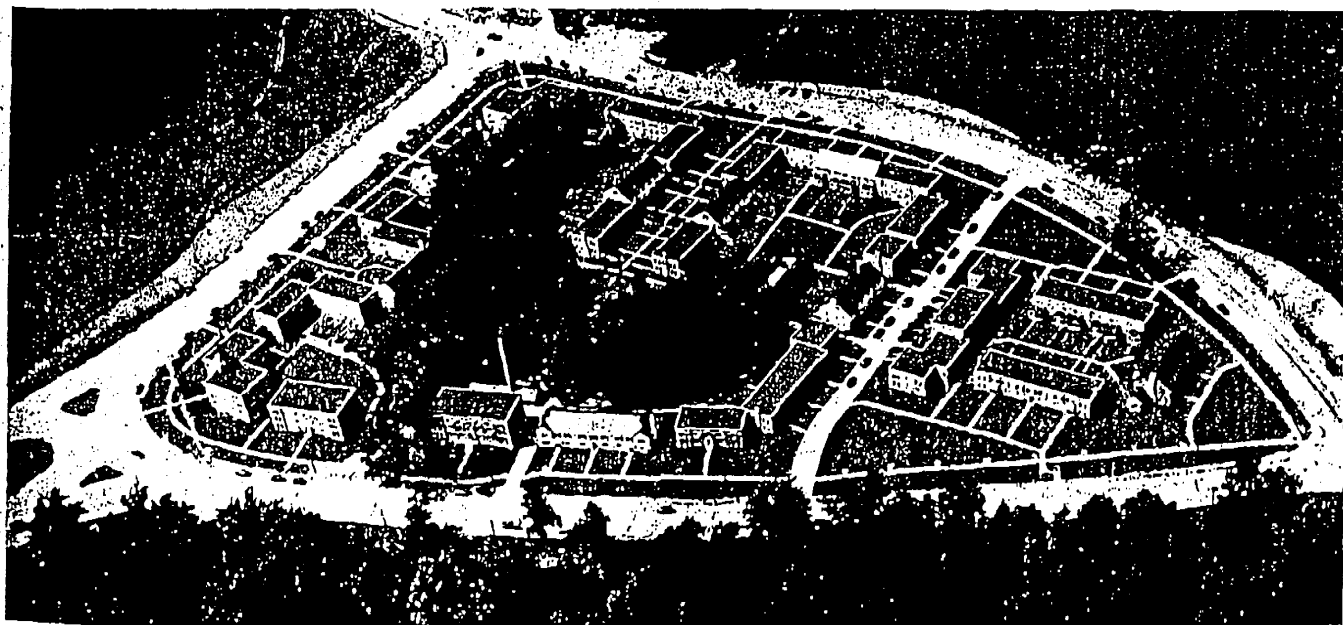
Details of how this development was made possible under the Federal Housing Administration plan and how it was arranged were briefly as follows:

After learning about the possibilities of insured mortgage financing for rental housing projects, we got in touch with what is now the Rental Housing Division of the Federal Housing Administration and laid our problem before it. From then on, the story of the development has been one of close teamwork between this agency and our own organization.

### *Housing situation was studied*

First, the whole housing situation in metropolitan Washington was canvassed, in the light of the complete and up-to-the-minute data assembled by the Administration. Second, the advisability of a large-scale rental housing project in the northern suburbs was considered, in view of conditions then existent and those likely to develop during the next 20 to 30 years. These studies indicated that our proposed project was feasible and economically sound. This was not our judgment alone, but the composite opinion of FHA economists, land planners, architects, appraisers, and construction and management specialists.

With this assurance we felt it safe to venture



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On a 10-acre tract at the end of Sixteenth Street NW. (at left above), the first Falkland Properties project provides 178 apartments. The second project, with 301, occupies 14 acres lying along the far sides of the first

further. We organized Falkland Properties, Inc., with a small block of stock to our architect, Louis Justement, of Washington, and another to B. L. Jackson, Inc., the general contractor. The remainder was retained by the estate. The land was transferred to Falkland Properties and work was begun on detailed plans for a 178-apartment project, occupying approximately 10 acres, right at the northern end of Sixteenth Street NW. Every detail was worked out carefully and definitely, including the rental scale per room, with the active aid of the FHA technicians and in light of their specialized information.

### *Large mortgage loan needed*

Total capitalization, including land and all improvements, carrying charges during construction, and cash to be reserved for working capital, was estimated at \$1,100,000. While we had substantial funds available for financing the cash equity requirements, a large mortgage loan was needed in order to keep our other funds liquid. We approached the insurance company which had agreed to finance the insured mortgage for Colonial Village. The reply was that Colonial Village was an experimental investment and that it would consider further lending on this type of security only after this first development had proved a success as an income producer. Other insurance companies sufficiently large to finance our project appeared unwilling to make even an experimental investment, and no bank large enough to handle the loan could be interested.

In this extremity, we approached the RFC Mortgage Company. In presenting our case there, the Federal Housing Administration cooperated by making all its data on the project available to the Company and by demonstrating the grounds upon which it had adjudged the project economically sound. What happened then was told in these columns last month by Jesse H. Jones, Chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Falkland Properties became the first rental housing project financed by the RFC Mortgage Company through an FHA-insured mortgage. The loan amounted to \$840,000.

Final details were worked out, including arrangements for the mortgagee to advance

construction funds under the insured mortgage as the work progressed. Contracts were let and construction begun in the fall of 1936.

The RFC Mortgage Company, as a matter of course, made the construction loan as an integral part of the mortgage loan. To my mind, that is logical. The institution offering only a permanent mortgage loan on the completed property has no opportunity to supervise the construction processes and misses the chance to put its funds to work at an earlier period. Where one institution makes both loans or actually one loan serving the purpose of both, time and expense of a double investigation is saved, the costs of negotiating two separate loans are avoided by the borrower, and the lending institution emerges with a better investment than if it had made only the construction loan. Under an FHA-insured mortgage of this type, it should be noted in this connection that funds for construction are fully insured as they are advanced by the mortgagee. The task of the borrower in obtaining a construction mortgage loan is considerably simplified, therefore, if the project is insurable by the Federal Housing Administration.

### *First project now complete*

Getting back to the story of Falkland Properties, the first project was completed in the spring of 1937. Meanwhile, the Union Central Life Insurance Company had become interested in insured rental housing mortgages through contact with the Federal Housing Administration. We had not approached this company when we were seeking our first loan, but we were more than pleased to learn that its representatives had opened negotiations with the RFC Mortgage Company for the purchase of the mortgage which the latter held. They had inspected Falkland Properties and liked the project. They bought the mortgage at a premium, as Mr. Jones stated.

We also liked what we saw at Falkland Properties. In fact, it looked so good to us, both from the land-owning and estate-investment standpoints, that we began planning a more ambitious project, still with the active cooperation of the FHA.

The addition of 301 apartments, occupying

*Continued on page 27*



# Solving an Estate Investment Problem

*Continued from page 10*

the remaining 14 acres of the tract and capitalized at \$1,625,000, was finally agreed upon, and the Administration gave a tentative commitment to insure a mortgage of \$1,225,000. We approached the Union Central Life Insurance Company directly on this loan, and while its general policy was to make no single mortgage loan for more than \$1,000,000, it made an exception in our case because of the FHA insurance and because of the way in which our first project had worked out.

The loan on the second section was granted on about the same terms as the first, save that the amortization period was 22 years. Construction of the addition began in August 1937 and by the spring of 1938 we expect Falkland Properties, comprising 479 apartments set in landscaped gardens, to be fully completed and occupied. The total capitalization of the land and improvements is \$2,725,000, with mortgages for \$2,065,000, bearing interest at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  percent.

## *Equity will increase monthly*

The equity in both projects, exceeding \$650,000 at present, will increase monthly by reason of the fact that the scheduled monthly amortization payments will retire the debt at a much faster rate than the property will depreciate. Repairs, maintenance, and replacements will be taken care of in the operating charges. From our present and prospective rentals, it is estimated that not only will sufficient cash income be available, after all charges, to pay the limited dividends of some \$30,000 a year, but also that a substantial cash surplus will remain after dividend payments to be applied to additional debt reduction.

In achieving these results, the service we received from the Federal Housing Administration, through its Rental Housing Division, was invaluable. We did not have the fact-finding facilities to determine whether the project was feasible from the economic standpoint. Obviously, the services of a good architect and good contractor were necessary. We had an excellent architect in Mr. Justement. In developing details of the plans, he had the advan-

tage of FHA architects' and landscape architects' checking and suggestions. We also had an excellent contractor in Mr. B. L. Jackson, Jr. He was aided by the experience and knowledge of the FHA construction men and developers, as well as by FHA inspections during construction. We had had some experience with apartment-house operation and management, but here again the advice of FHA specialists was available.

Even in the financing, FHA participation in the project was of vital service. The RFC Mortgage Company and the Union Central Life Insurance Company hardly would have been interested had the project not been approved and the mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration.

## *Regulations protect owner*

True, under the FHA regulations, we have surrendered a measure of our control during the lives of the mortgages. But our experience indicates that those regulations are, on the whole, based on conservative operating policies, and therefore tend to protect the owner's interest in the property.

In the matter of rentals, I have no doubt that at present we could get considerably higher rents than we are allowed under FHA regulations. To an investment manager of an estate, however, this reduction in income is offset by the additional security which results from this policy. Our existing rents, while relatively low, place the property in a much broader and hence a much safer rental market, and vacancies should be reduced to a minimum.

With the attractiveness of the property as a place to live already proven, we feel confident that the occupancy ratio will continue at or near the present 100 percent. The vacancy allowance which was made in setting up the project is thus a true safety factor, and we expect the excess income over the normal expectancy materially to accelerate amortization of the mortgages.

As to the FHA operating requirements, these are designed to keep the property in first-class condition and hence to maintain its appeal to the renting public. They bring housing opera-

tion into line with the policy followed in sound industrial enterprises; that is, they require due provision for maintenance and replacements and the building up of adequate cash reserves to meet requirements on these accounts. Thus the FHA regulations provide still another safety factor and one which is of particular importance to the equity owners. Certainly we have not found the regulations constituting in any sense a restrictive interference in our operation of the property.

Finally, as to the matter of dividend limitation, we feel that the annual cash income allowed by the FHA on our equity investment is adequate, especially in view of the fact that the cash dividends constitute only part of our real return from the property. Each year part of the rental income, as I have already indicated, is applied to debt retirement, so that when the mortgage loans are paid off the full amount of the rental income now applied to interest, mortgage insurance premiums, and amortization will become available for dividend payments. With proper maintenance assured during the amortization period and with the expected appreciation of land value, we should have at the close of that period a property worth at least as much as it is today, free of all debt, and released from all regulation by the FHA.

What more could the investment manager of an estate ask? We keep our original land investment. We convert it from a liability into an income-producing asset with prospects of steady income and appreciation. We find a safe investment for some of our liquid funds. We realize eventually a good, unencumbered, income-producing housing property.

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### *Forum Speakers Announced*

LEADING authorities on real-estate appraisal and mortgage economics are among the speakers on the program of the National Appraisal Forum, which will meet in Washington, D. C., November 19-20 to discuss real-estate research and data facilities.

Daniel C. Roper, Secretary of Commerce, will deliver the opening address. Other speakers include Dr. Mordecai Ezekiel, Department of Agriculture; Walter S. Schmidt, former president, National Association of Real Estate

Boards; Horace Russell, Federal Home Loan Bank Board; and Dr. Ernest M. Fisher, Federal Housing Administration.

Group sessions will be led by S. F. Westbrook, Aetna Insurance Company; Roy M. Green, Bureau of Agricultural Economics; Earl Schwulst, Bowery Savings Bank; and Dr. N. H. Engle, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, under whose direction the Real Property Inventories of 1934 were made.

The presiding officer will be Frederick M. Babcock, Director of the Underwriting Division of the FHA and chairman of the Joint Committee on Appraisal and Mortgage Analysis. It is under the auspices of the latter committee, composed of representatives of both private and governmental agencies interested in appraisal problems, that the Forum is being held.

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### *Losses to the Insurance Fund*

OUT of \$713,562,307 in premium-paying mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration, net losses charged against the Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund amounted to \$8,748.27 through September 30, or around one one-thousandth of 1 percent. Only 37 mortgages out of the total of 175,888 insured since inauguration of the Insured Mortgage System 3 years ago had been foreclosed by mortgagees and the properties securing them turned over to the Administrator...

Government-guaranteed debentures amounting to \$156,869.28 were issued the mortgagees in exchange for these properties, as provided in the mortgage-insurance contract. Nineteen of the properties had been sold, with the aforementioned \$8,748.28 net loss. Debentures issued in connection with 10 of the 19 properties, amounting to \$44,987.76, were retired and an additional \$37,879.11 authorized to be retired. This left \$74,002.41 in debentures outstanding.

The net worth of the Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund as of September 30 was \$20,597,733.08 and the income from fees, insurance premiums, etc., was averaging about \$600,000 monthly.

Part of this revenue is now being used to defray field-office expenses of the Administration. Eventually it is expected that the Administration will be entirely self-sustaining.

*David B. Paris*

901 LARCH AVENUE, TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

December 6, 2007

*Via Email: MCP-Chairman@mncppc-mc.org*

Royce Hanson, Chair,  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Ave.  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Ref: Review of Falkland Apartments for listing on Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Dear Dr. Hanson:

This letter is intended to supplement my November 25 testimony regarding a March 21, 2005 letter from Dr. Daniel Koski-Karell that has been reintroduced by Home Properties.

Purporting to be an architectural historian, Dr. Koski-Karell claims that Falkland was not a prototype for garden apartments, that it was not inspired by the garden city movement, that it was not designed by a master architect, and that it was not constructed pursuant to a unified design vision. Dr. Koski-Karell's qualifications to make such pronouncements warrant scrutiny, particularly because his views are so radically at variance with the prevailing opinion of architectural historians, historic preservation organizations and the staff of the Historic Preservation Commission.

It appears that Dr. Koski-Karell is better suited to conduct an analysis of anthropological matters relating to the Falkland Islands than the architectural history of the Falkland apartments. Although portrayed on his letterhead as an Architectural History Consultant, Dr. Koski-Karell appears to be a distinguished marine anthropologist, rather than an architectural historian. He failed to attach his curriculum vitae to his testimony. However, it has been reported that in 2003 he was awarded a Ph.D. in anthropology from the Catholic University of America, and that he previously received a similar M.A. degree from the same institution.

According to the attached 2005 memorandum submitted by a respected architectural historian regarding the COMSAT Laboratories historic preservation application, it appears that the bulk of Dr. Koski-Karell's practice involves marine anthropological matters rather than problems involving architectural history. See attached Dr. David Rotenstein, Memorandum to Montgomery Historic Preservation Commission, Re COMSAT Laboratories Supplemental Information, April 3, 2005.

Moreover, the accuracy of Dr. Koski-Karell's sweeping conclusions appears to be suspect. His letter asserts that the Falkland apartments were not a prototype for other garden apartments because its design "copied heavily from earlier apartments developments such as Colonial Village in Arlington, Virginia." Yet the construction of the Virginia apartment began only a year before the Falkland project, and his analysis is at variance with those of a number of qualified architectural historians including James M. Goode in his well-known book *Best Addresses*. Home Properties' own website states that Falkland was a prototype for other apartment complexes that followed.

David Paris  
Montgomery Planning Board  
Falkland  
December 6, 2007  
Page 2

The claim that Falkland is divided into "three distinct parts" is refuted by one of Dr. Koski-Karell own sources. At the time that the second section of Falkland was under construction, William D. Blair, President of Falkland Properties, described the combined west and north parcels as the "second section, which will contain 301 family units." See William D. Blair, *Solving an Estate Investment Problem, Insured Mortgage Portfolio*, November 1937, p. 8. For Blair the result of the Falkland effort "is that we have transformed 24 acres of land, which 2 years ago were a liability to the Blair estate, into a community providing housing completed or under construction, for 479 families." *Id.* at 9. Further, the second section was financed as a single unit by the Union Central Life Insurance Company. *Id.* at 27.

Falkland was also a prototype with respect to construction financing. Blair indicates that the insurance company, which paid a premium when it purchased the mortgage on the first section from the Reconstruction Finance Company (RFC), became interested in the project "through contact with the Federal Housing Administration." *Id.* at 10. The first section of Falkland was the "first rental housing project financed by the RFC Mortgage Company through an FHA-insured mortgage." *Id.* The FHA cooperated with the RFC by making "all of its data available to the Company." *Id.*

The claim that Louis Justement should not be considered a master architect is yet another example of Dr. Koski-Karell's strained advocacy. Blair reports that Justement, an "excellent architect...had the advantage of FHA architects' and landscape architects' checking and suggestions." *Id.* at 27. Moreover, the role that Dr. Koski-Karell assigns to Justement is inconsistent with the architect becoming the only person outside the Blair family to obtain a block of Falkland Properties stock. See Blair, p. 10. Koski-Karell places great weight on the absence of Justement buildings in the American Institute of Architects guide to the architecture of Washington, DC. However, Justement's 1952 Barrett Prettyman Courthouse, a National Register eligible building, is found in the fourth edition of the guide, a volume that includes 2006 material.

In summary, the 2005 letter by Dr. Koski-Karell is an inaccurate advocacy document that contains obvious inaccuracies and oversights. The writer's conclusions are at odds with the weight of professional and community judgment that the Falkland Apartments, which was designed as an integrated unit, remains an important architectural and historic resource that is worthy of historic designation and preservation.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely



David B. Paris

Attachments:

1. Dr. David Rotenstein, Memorandum to Montgomery Historic Preservation Commission, Re COMSAT Laboratories Supplemental Information, April 3, 2005.
2. William D. Blair, *Solving an Estate Investment Problem, Insured Mortgage Portfolio*, November 1937, p. 8.

November 25, 2007

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

Re: Review of Falkland Apartments for listing on Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Chairman Hanson and Planning Commissioners:

My name is David Paris, and I'm an attorney living in Takoma Park. I am a member of the board of directors of Historic Takoma, although I am speaking as an individual. Tonight, I shall address contentions of Mr. Koski-Karell that were first submitted in 2005 prior to the decision to list Falkland on the Locational Atlas of Historic Sites. Since the Falkland owner and his attorneys have resubmitted the material, I am providing this amplified response.

One. *Mr. Koski-Karell denied that the Falklands were a prototype for garden apartment development in Montgomery County.* Falklands were the first true garden apartments in the County. In 1984, Park Historian Mark Walston, whom Koski-Karell cites, claimed that a four-flat structure in Takoma Park was the first. Walston probably consulted a 1931 Klinge atlas that erroneously labeled the building as "garden apartments." However, green space was not part of that building, and green space is a distinguishing feature of garden apartments. Andrea Rebeck in her extensive study of Montgomery County in 1988 identified Falkland as the first garden apartment complex in the County. Other multifamily housing was constructed in the 1930s, but Falkland has the distinction of being first garden apartment.

In fact, Falkland was a prototype for the nation as well as the county. James M. Goode in his celebrated book *Best Addresses*, states that Falkland was one of three projects in the Washington, D.C. area (the others were in Virginia) that "set the pace for hundreds of thousands of garden apartments throughout the nation." Another presentation includes a slide depicting a 1937 *Washington Post* article identifying Falkland and Colonial as major national prototypes. Interestingly, Home Properties' own website states that Falkland was a prototype for other apartment complexes that followed.

Falkland was influenced by a proud handful of early apartment developments elsewhere that were inspired by the English Garden City movement. This heritage should be considered a plus. Moreover, Falkland built on these models to create a unique plan and design, according to architectural historians Goode and Richard Longstreth.

Two. *Koski-Karell denies that Falkland “is an example of design elements from the Garden City movement.”* Although, the Garden City ideal was about new towns and single homes, Americans Henry Wright and Clarence Stein, who designed and influenced the earliest garden apartments in this country, did not build “Garden Cities.” It was never claimed that Falkland is a Garden City. Stein and Wright adapted the Garden City principles and applied them to U.S. apartment dwellings—those principles include low density, open space, natural land contours, and common design elements. The pioneering designs of early garden apartments like Falkland and Chatham Village are important because they exemplify how knowledge and design evolved. There is a voluminous literature to support this contention.

Three. *Koski-Karell denies that Falkland was one of the first three projects insured by the Federal Housing Administration.* This argument is a straw man since, it was never claimed that Falkland was one of the first three of ANY AND ALL projects backed by the Federal Housing Administration. The FHA included a broad array of programs such as single-family housing. Falkland is notable because it was the first *large-scale garden apartment* in Maryland and probably the second or third in the nation to receive FHA backing, according to architectural historian Richard Longstreth who has written an extensive study of the FHA’s role in apartment construction. (Koski-Karell does not deny this.)

Falkland and Colonial Village are significant because they were among the projects marking the launch of a major new role for the Federal government in multifamily housing. The FHA’s Rental Housing Division (RHD), along with architects like Justement, was able to create housing for moderate income families that provided high quality and pleasant surroundings. These projects influenced multifamily housing for years to come. During the first five years of its existence, the RHD insured the mortgages of 291 projects containing over 32,000 units in 38 states, most of the projects being garden apartments. Through important pilot projects such as Falkland, the RHD demonstrated to private investors the financial viability of this type of housing.

Four. *Koski-Karell denies that Falkland’s architect, Louis Justement, was a Master in the field of architecture.* Since, the HPC’s recommendation does not include this criteria, the master status of Justement is not before the planning commission. However, local preservationists count him as a Master.

But what evidence does Koski-Karell provide? First, he claims that architects regarded as Masters have books written about them. Koski-Karell incorrectly claims that Louis Justement's work is not included in the AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington. However, Justement's 1952 Barrett Prettyman Courthouse, a National Register eligible building, is found in the fourth edition of the guide, a volume that includes 2006 material. Architectural history and preservation consultant Sally Lichtenstein Berk quickly named seven DC area master architects who have not been the subject of books. One is George Santmyers, designer of Montgomery Arms apartments in Silver Spring, which is on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Santmyers and Justement each designed several prominent buildings in DC's Kalorama Triangle Historic District.

Koski-Karell asserts that Falkland was a collaborative effort of Justement and FHA staff architects rather than the work of Justement alone. However, I believe that Justement was undoubtedly the designer. No one else has questioned his role. The FHA had construction standards, which dovetailed nicely with architects like Justement who were influenced by Garden City ideals. The Blair article that Koski-Karell cites says that the "excellent architect" Louis Justement simply "had the advantage of FHA architects' and landscape architects' checking and suggestions."

Justement was prominent enough to be included among the 50 participants at a major planning symposium at Princeton in 1946. His fellow participants included giants Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Phillip Johnson, Mies van der Rohe, and Robert Moses. That same year, Justement was one of only eight architects named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, the highest honor the profession can bestow on its peers. Falkland demonstrated his reputation as a master planner as well as a master architect.

**Five. Koski-Karell claims that the three parts of Falkland should be considered independently for preservation.** Falkland was of course built in stages, as were the other pioneering and prominent garden apartment projects that are on the National Register—Sunnyside Gardens, Radburn, and Chatham Village. But, I doubt if builders of this era even considered dividing up development projects and designating separate properties. Moreover, the unified design vision of each of these apartment complexes has not been affected by parking alternations made over the years that mostly occurred before the properties were listed on the National Register.

It is doubtful that any of the references Koski-Karell cites actually asserts that there are three separate properties. William D. Blair, the owner, considered the three areas together as “Falkland Properties.” Moreover, the use of separate mortgages to finance the buildings does not render them separate properties for purposes of the designation process. The use of separate mortgages was simply a matter of expedience and construction timing. Additionally, it appears that the north and west sectors were under one mortgage that was underwritten by the FHA. When Eleanor Roosevelt cut the ribbon to celebrate Falkland’s opening, the entire project was recognized, even though two of the sectors had not been completed. *Mr. Koski-Karell is simply making a transparent strategic attempt to isolate the north sector that his client wants to redevelop.*

Finally, although, its structures like all older buildings have undergone “normal, required maintenance,” the integrity of Falkland endures. Maryland Historical Trust considers the property National Register eligible despite the loss of 34 units on the south parcel. The Silver Spring Historical Society, a number of public and private preservation entities, and a number of prominent architectural historians, correctly assert that Falkland is presently eminently worthy of protecting and listing on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Sincerely,

David Paris



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: David S. Rotenstein, Ph.D., RPA, Commissioner

RE: COMSAT Laboratories Supplemental Information

DATE: 3 April 2005

In accordance with the motion to continue the hearing regarding the COMSAT Laboratories property, I have reviewed documentation provided to the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) by the property owner's counsel, Linowes and Blocher, and its consultant, Mr. Daniel Koski-Karell. I am greatly troubled by Mr. Koski-Karell's 9 March 2005 testimony and his written report bearing the same date. Mr. Koski-Karell presented his testimony as an expert in architectural history and asked the HPC to review the documentation prepared in rebuttal to a HPC staff report and various documents prepared documenting the historical and architectural significance of the COMSAT Laboratories property.

Mr. Koski-Karell did not append a copy of his curriculum vitae to his report; however, several academic and government databases provide some insights into his credentials. I believe that it is essential for the HPC to understand Mr. Koski-Karell's credentials as an architectural historian. He has taken it upon himself to infer that interpretations made by HPC staff and by internationally recognized architectural history experts of the COMSAT property's significance are incorrect and that these experts have ineptly interpreted standard academic sources in American social and architectural history.

Mr. Koski-Karell in 2003 was awarded a Ph.D. in anthropology from The Catholic University of America. His doctoral dissertation, titled "Prehistoric Northern Haiti: Settlement in Diachronic Ecological Context," evaluated previously collected archaeological data to understand Pre-Columbian environments and settlement patterns.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Koski-Karell's other graduate credentials include a M.A. degree in anthropology, again awarded by The Catholic University. His 1976 thesis was titled "The Boucaniers of Hispaniola: An Ethnohistorical Reconstruction."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Koski-Karell has nearly three decades of experience as an archaeologist. The National Park Service's National Archaeological Database cites sixty-seven reports that Mr. Koski-Karell has authored since 1979.<sup>3</sup> These citations include many cultural resource management reports prepared on behalf of clients complying with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as well one article published in the journal *Maryland Archeology*. The academic database, America History and Life has one entry for Mr. Koski-Karell: a 1985 book review of treasure

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Koski-Karell, "Prehistoric Northern Haiti: Settlement in Diachronic Ecological Context" (Ph. D. diss., Anthropology, The Catholic University of America, 2002), *DAI-A* 63/12 June: 4363.

<sup>2</sup> Koski-Karell, "Prehistoric Northern Haiti," 315. Washington Research Library Consortium, 2 April 2005 <<http://catalog.wrlc.org>>.

<sup>3</sup> United States. Department of the Interior. National Park Service, *National Archaeological Database*, 2 April 2005 <<http://www.cast.uark.edu/other/nps/nadb/>>.

hunter Duncan Matthewson's book on the Spanish shipwreck, *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*. Archaeological expertise, however, is not synonymous with historical and architectural historical expertise.

### ***Historic Property's Name***

The document submitted by Daniel Koski-Karell, a consultant to the property owner's attorneys, purports to be a Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form documenting the COMSAT Laboratories property.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Koski-Karell's report gives the property's historic name as the "Lockheed Martin Building."<sup>5</sup> According to the MIHP form prepared in November 2004 by University of Maryland architectural history professors Isabelle Gournay and Mary Corbin Sies, the property's historic name is "COMSAT Laboratories."<sup>6</sup> Koski-Karell provides no guidance on his decision to identify the property's "historic name" as the "Lockheed Martin Building." The MHT offers detailed instructions for the completion of MIHP forms. "The historic name is generally the name associated with the historic significance of the property. The historic name of the property will be used to identify the property in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties and any other publications," offers the MHT publication *Standards and Guidelines for Architectural and Historical Investigations in Maryland*.<sup>7</sup> MIHP forms offer consultants and others a second place to enter a historic property's name. "In the space provided," the MHT instructs, "enter any other names by which the property has been commonly known."<sup>8</sup> Since Lockheed Martin was a successor to COMSAT at the property, a more reasonable approach would have been to retain the historic name COMSAT (a name by which the building is commonly known among Montgomery County residents) and use the second space, "other," for the Lockheed Martin name.

### ***Design by Cesar Pelli***

Mr. Koski-Karell strongly asserts that attribution of the COMSAT Laboratories building to architect Cesar Pelli "is patently absurd."<sup>9</sup> The consultant further suggests that the substantive record based on primary documents research and Mr. Pelli's own recollections introduced by professors Gournay and Sies and complemented by HPC staff research is fatally flawed. Among the reasons Mr. Koski-Karell provides are his evaluations of Mr. Pelli's handwriting. Although Mr. Koski-Karell's credentials would appear to be impressive – he is an underwater and terrestrial archaeologist and architectural historian, based on the needs of particular projects – he does not appear to be an expert in handwriting analysis.

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel Koski-Karell, "Lockheed Martin Building," Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form (9 March 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Koski-Karell, "Lockheed Martin Building," 1.

<sup>6</sup> Isabelle Gournay and Mary Corbin Sies, "COMSAT Laboratories," Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form (1 November 2004), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Maryland Historical Trust, *Standards and Guidelines for Architectural and Historical Investigations in Maryland* (Crownsville: Maryland Historical Trust, 2000), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Maryland Historical Trust, *Standards and Guidelines*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Koski-Karell, "Lockheed Martin Building," 3.

### *Associative Significance*

Professors Gournay and Sies prepared a thoroughly-researched historic context in their 2004 MIHP form and its substance does not leave much ambiguity regarding the property's historical significance. The Communications Satellite Corporation was chartered by the U.S. Congress under Title III of the Communications Act of 1962.<sup>10</sup> The act required that the company be incorporated in the District of Columbia and it explicitly detailed the new corporation's governance, financing, and its purposes.<sup>11</sup> Among the requirements in the 1962 law was that the new corporation was "to acquire the physical facilities, equipment and devices necessary to its operations, including communications satellites and associated equipment and facilities, **whether by construction, purchase, or gift.**"<sup>12</sup>

Incorporated in February 1963, the new corporation moved its headquarters into an existing building in Washington, DC.<sup>13</sup> COMSAT, as the company came to be known by its Cold War era acronym, by default became the private sector representative of the United States in the communications satellite sector. The company also became the United States' agent in the international satellite consortium, INTELSAT.<sup>14</sup> COMSAT emerged at a critical point in history. The 1960s represented the height of the Cold War and was a period of revolutionary developments in the telecommunications and broadcast industries: the first cracks in AT&T's monopoly on long-distance telephony began to emerge with the ascendance of MCI and television was rapidly overtaking radio as the nation's leading information and entertainment medium.

Mr. Koski-Karell refuted the documentation supporting the COMSAT property's significance in both his report and oral testimony before the HPC 9 March 2005. Mr. Koski-Karell suggests that the property's associations with events and people prior to construction of the COMSAT Laboratories building are tenuous and are not consistent with Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code that requires that historic properties have "value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation."<sup>15</sup> COMSAT's entire history, including its legislative, economic, and social elements, is essential to understanding the property's significance. "For history to be significant to a building," wrote Mr. Koski-Karell, "it should be directly associated with that building. It should not be history associated with some other time and place."<sup>16</sup>

Legislated by Congress and grown during the period 1963-1967, COMSAT established its first headquarters in Macomb Street located in the Northwest Washington, DC, neighborhood of

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<sup>10</sup> 47 U.S.C. §731, "There is authorized to be created a communications satellite corporation for profit."

<sup>11</sup> 47 U.S.C. §§ 732-735.

<sup>12</sup> 47 U.S.C. §753. Emphasis added.

<sup>13</sup> Gournay and Sies, "COMSAT Laboratories," 8/12.

<sup>14</sup> Erik Barnouw, *The Image Empire: A History of Broadcasting in the United States* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 208-09; Leonard S. Hyman, Edward DiNapoli, and Richard C. Toole, *The New Telecommunications Industry* (Vienna, Virginia: Public Utilities Reports, Inc., 1997), 117.

<sup>15</sup> §24A(3)(b)(1)(a).

<sup>16</sup> Koski-Karell, "Lockheed Martin Building," 17.

Cleveland Park. Shortly thereafter, it then moved to L'Enfant Plaza. As the company matured and its capital increased, it followed the legislative mandate to construct facilities by acquiring its property in Montgomery County and building its laboratories. The particular site COMSAT selected also is an artifact of its historical setting: the Cold War. Washington, DC, was considered a primary target in a heavily anticipated nuclear war that never materialized. Government agencies and contractors sited themselves beyond the perceived nuclear threat downtown Washington presented. Mr. Koski-Karell's suggestions that the HPC should divorce the COMSAT property from its historic context are a disingenuous attempt to decontextualize the property and obfuscate its ties to the events and people that contributed to its construction.

### ***The Machine in the Garden***

Mr. Koski-Karell's discussion of Leo Marx's 1964 book, *The Machine in the Garden*, ranks among the most spurious, specious, and unsupported scholarship in his report. Mr. Koski-Karell wrote that Marx's landmark study of nineteenth century social history "is a book about literature in American history."<sup>17</sup> He also wrote that Marx's book "is most definitely NOT a book about architecture."<sup>18</sup> Koski-Karell underscored his arguments by citing the index in Marx's book: "Before someone calls the LMB a machine in the garden they should become more familiar with Leo Marx's book. They should take note of how many times the word 'architecture' is mentioned in it, which is zero. A page from this book's index is provided as Figure 5 [in Koski-Karell's report]. The word 'architecture' is not listed."<sup>19</sup>

I am impressed by Mr. Koski-Karell's initiative in acquiring Leo Marx's book and for reading it as part of his involvement in the COMSAT proceedings.<sup>20</sup> I am unimpressed, however, by Mr. Koski-Karell's cavalier and unprofessional comments regarding the substance of Marx's book and the inference that the HPC staff and the esteemed architectural historians who prepared the original Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties form inappropriately cited the book in their evaluations of the property's historical significance. Mr. Koski-Karell compounded the factual and interpretive errors in his written report during his 9 March 2005 testimony before the HPC:

[A]nother thing I found really a, you know, a little bit funny was the Machine in the Garden business. Everybody remembers the machine in the garden. That's, you know, listed down here and one of the reasons why it should be nominated or listed because it shows the Machine in the Garden idea, a futuristic building. Well, Machine in the Garden, what's the Machine in the Garden? This is the Machine in the Garden is a choo choo train. The book that they cite as the design aesthetic or establishing the, you know, the

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<sup>17</sup> Koski-Karell, "Lockheed Martin Building," 9.

<sup>18</sup> Koski-Karell, "Lockheed Martin Building," 9, emphasis in the original.

<sup>19</sup> Koski-Karell, "Lockheed Martin Building," 10.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel Koski-Karell, Testimony, *Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission*, Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: COMSAT Laboratories, 22300 Comsat Drive, Clarksburg, MD (Silver Spring, MD, 9 March 2005).

concept, architectural concept of Machine in the Garden, this is a book about American literature.<sup>21</sup>

Mr. Koski-Karell's assessment of the book is not supported by the many scholars spanning a wide breadth of the academe who have cited Marx's book, and more specifically, Marx's introduction of the concept of the "middle landscape" to the fields of landscape architecture, architectural history, cultural geography, history, and others. Scholars as from such divergent backgrounds as environmental historian Michael Williams and anthropologist Anthony Wallace have cited book and its concepts their discussions of nineteenth century American social and material culture history.<sup>22</sup> And then there are the architectural and landscape historians, among them Thomas Bender,<sup>23</sup> who have cited Marx and his book as a prominent influence. "Scholars such as Leo Marx, Henry Nash Smith, and Annette Kolodny had had a decisive impact on the study of American landscape," reflected cultural geographer George Henderson in a 2003 essay on landscape architecture.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Marx himself wrote in an afterward to the 2000 edition of *The Machine in the Garden*, "At first, *The Machine in the Garden* was well received inside and outside the academy. It was translated into several languages and cited approvingly by scholars in fields other than history and literature – **notably art history, architecture, landscape architecture, and planning.**"<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Koski-Karell, *Testimony*.

<sup>22</sup> Anthony F.C. Wallace, *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution* (New York, New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 260; Michael Williams, *Americans & Their Forests: A Historical Geography* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989). 15.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Bender, "The 'Rural' Cemetery Movement: Urban Travail and the Appeal of Nature," in *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston, Massachusetts: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 505-18; Paul Groth, "Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study," in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1997), 1-21; Kenneth Blair Hawkins, "The Therapeutic Landscape: Nature, Architecture, and Mind in Nineteenth-Century America" (Ph. D. diss., Department of History, The University of Rochester, 1991).

<sup>24</sup> George L. Henderson, "What (Else) We Talk About When We Talk About Landscape," in *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J.B. Jackson*, ed. Chris Wilson and Paul Groth (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003), 180.

<sup>25</sup> Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2000), 381, emphasis added.



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**TESTIMONY TO HPC IN SUPPORT OF THE INCLUSION OF THE FALKLAND APARTMENTS IN THE COUNTY MASTER PLAN OF HISTORIC PLACES**

I am Jim Humphrey, Chair of the MCCF Planning and Land Use Committee, testifying on behalf of the Federation. At the March 2005 meeting of the Civic Federation, the delegates approved a resolution supporting the placement of the Falkland Apartments on the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites because we believed then, as we still do today, that the Falklands are a jewel of architectural history to be cherished and preserved. And so we also support inclusion of the Falklands in the Master Plan for Historic Places.

The Falklands was one of the first in the nation of a style of multi-family housing developments that gave us the term "garden apartment." And, it could be argued that it is the best remaining example of how these projects were successfully integrated into both the natural and the built environment. The three sections of the Falklands exhibit a bravado in their fusion with this topographically challenging site, and beautifully demonstrate the diversity of approach to the siting of "garden apartments"--the eastern portion situated in the divergence of 16th Street and Colesville Road, with its central courtyard green area; the western portion nestled into the woods on a rise atop a branch of Rock Creek; and, the northern portion woven around a deep stream gorge and stand of 100-year-old or so oak trees, between the B&O railroad tracks and the historically important East-West Highway.

The Falklands would certainly rank as the first stop on a heritage tourism visit to the area, and the marketing of an architectural heritage tour could be a real asset to Silver Spring's economic development. There is more to be preserved here, however, than a relic of a historically important style of architecture. There are environmental assets worth preserving as well, in the form of greenspace in which residents can walk their dogs, toss a ball with their children, or spread a blanket and have a picnic. And there is the important forested area on the northern section, which becomes more valuable every day as our urban tree canopy falls victim to redevelopment. The Falklands is also a community of people, important to the Federation because decades ago the residents formed the first citizens association of renters in the county.

There is only one Falklands in Montgomery County. Please recommend Master Plan inclusion for ~~the~~ all three sections of this historically and architecturally important treasure. Thank you.