



**VICTORY HOUSING SUBMISSION TO
THE CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

Potential Historic District Designation of the “Fleet Street” Property

June 11, 2008

Victory Housing, Inc. (“VHI”) is a nonprofit developer of affordable housing established in 1979. VHI and its affiliates currently own nine communities for seniors in Montgomery County and are part owners in two others. In 2007, VHI entered into an agreement with Montgomery County to lease a portion of the property known as the Fleet Street site to build an independent living community for low- and moderate-income senior citizens. This new community will be known as Victory Court.

The purpose of this submission is to provide our input regarding the location of the proposed historic district boundary on the site.

Description of Victory Court

- Victory Court will be a three-and-a-half story, 88-unit apartment building with one- and two-bedroom units. The building will include a variety of activity space for residents, including a library with a cyber cafe, beauty salon, arts and crafts room, and wellness/exercise center.
- The property will include approximately 53 parking spaces.
- The site plan is compact and built into the steep topography.
- The Craftsman Style architecture is consistent with the City of Rockville local architectural style. The manor home style, with varying roof lines, steeply pitched roofs with stone and siding will enhance and blend into the existing community. Please see Exhibit B for the proposed elevation of the building. Montgomery County supports VHI’s proposed design.
- In an initial meeting with homeowners in the adjacent Courthouse Walk town homes, we received positive feedback and they seem amenable to our plan.

Building Location

- Exhibit A shows a plan view of Victory Court.
- The footprint of the building and access/parking was determined over many months of design meetings. Essentially, three main factors determined the location of the building:

Building restriction lines: The blue line in Exhibit A represents the required building setback on the west side of the property. Clearly the building cannot move any further to the southwest.



Natural Resources: Any new development requires local government approval of a natural resources inventory and a tree conservation plan. The location of the building in relationship to the existing wooded area was chosen to limit the impact on both the site and surrounding neighborhood.

Topography: Due to the fact that the grade on the site slopes to the southwest, we were limited in potential locations. Per the work of the architect and our engineers, the footprint in Exhibit A is the best location.

Historic District Boundary Recommendation

- The Historic District Commission (HDC) is recommending the establishment of an historic district in order to protect certain homes along Maryland Avenue and Fleet Street. The borders conflict with the footprint of the proposed Victory Court building and the access/parking area. If the border as recommended is approved, any development within the historic boundaries will be subjected to an HDC formal approval process. If an historic district is established but the border does not conflict with a proposed development, HDC will still have the right to perform a courtesy review.
- VHI and Montgomery County recommend that the historic district border depicted on Exhibit A be approved by the Planning Commission. The border would still protect the homes along Maryland Avenue and Fleet Street and Victory Court would be subject to a courtesy review by HDC prior to construction. The justification for our recommendation is discussed below under “Impacts to Victory Court.”
- Exhibit A also shows the existing garages on the site, which are located behind the homes and within the proposed access/parking area for Victory Court. The historic district boundary proposed by VHI and Montgomery County bisects two of the garages and does not include one other. As part of this submission, we request the garages be either torn down or relocated, if possible, based on reviews by VHI and an historic consultant, Robert Lebovich. The conclusion of these reviews are as follows:
 - The garages are in extremely poor condition with roof and wall damage, cracked foundations, substantial rot, and it appears that most if not all of the roofs are unsound and therefore pose a safety concern. Exhibit C shows the conditions of the garages. While we would be willing to explore the possibility of moving the garages, due to the existing conditions it is likely to be very difficult.
 - Neither the City of Rockville Planning Department nor Mr. Lebovich have been able to verify that these garages were built at the same time as the houses.



Impacts to Victory Court

There are a number of reasons for our request to locate the historic district boundary as proposed in Exhibit A:

- Due to the issues discussed above under “Building Location,” there are significant reasons why the building, and therefore access/parking, are located as shown on the site plan. If the garages cannot be torn down or moved, Victory Court will have to incur the additional costs of moving the building footprint to accommodate the garages. If the garages are torn down, we would explore options such as photographing and archiving the garages or alternative ways to preserve a portion of the garages, including storing and re-using doors on another portion of the County’s property.
- Required approvals and limits placed on the ground lease area will be reviewed by lenders and investors, who typically require limited restrictions in order to finance the transaction. Therefore, the location of the historic district line within the ground lease area and the building footprint could complicate negotiations when we seek financing for the transaction.

Summary

VHI and Montgomery County believe the historic district boundary we are proposing is a reasonable way to simultaneously achieve historic preservation of the homes in question and meet the significant need for high quality affordable housing for seniors in the community. Therefore, we respectfully request that the City of Rockville implement the historic district boundary recommended herein and attached as Exhibit A.

EXHIBIT A

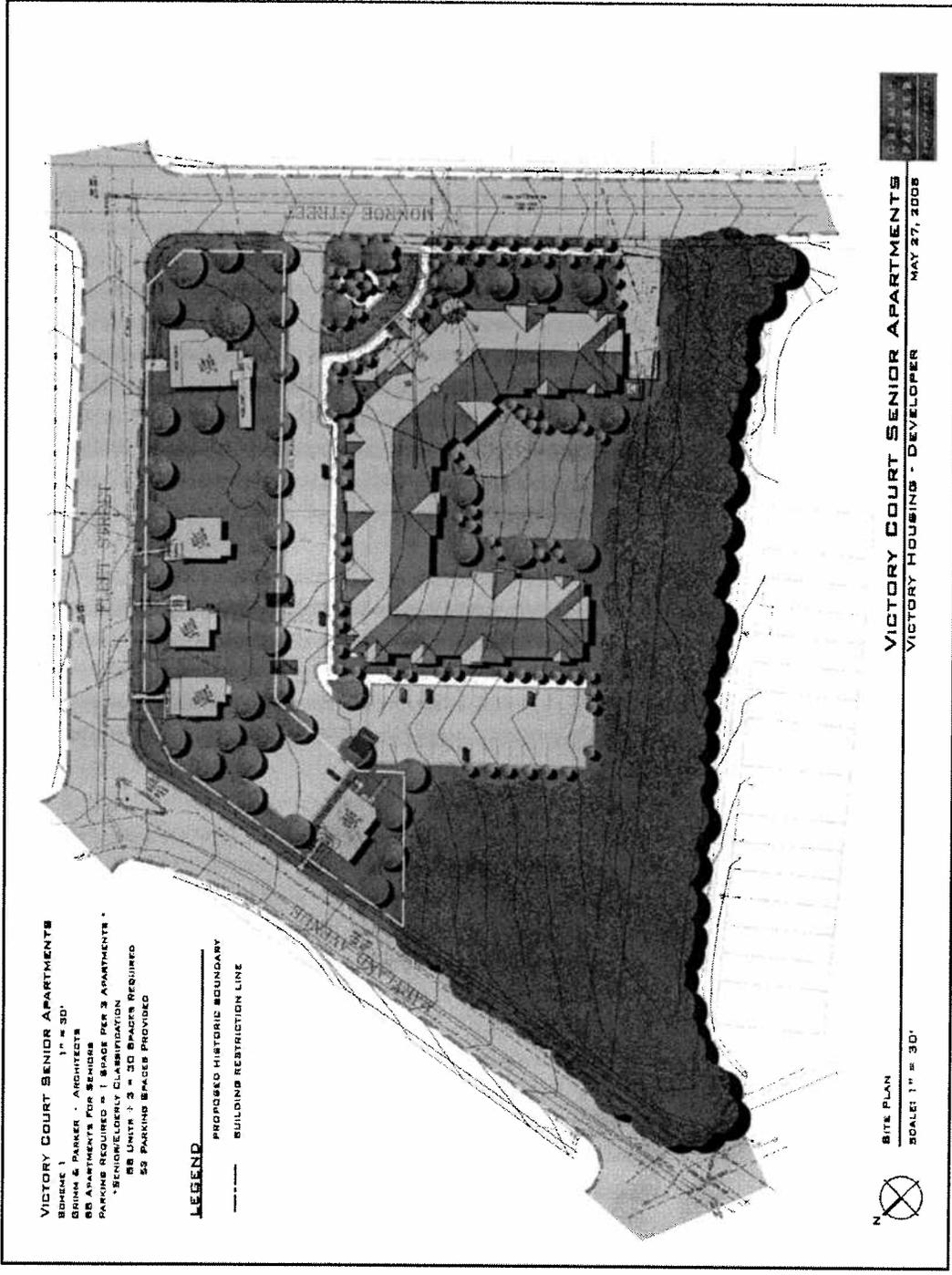


EXHIBIT B

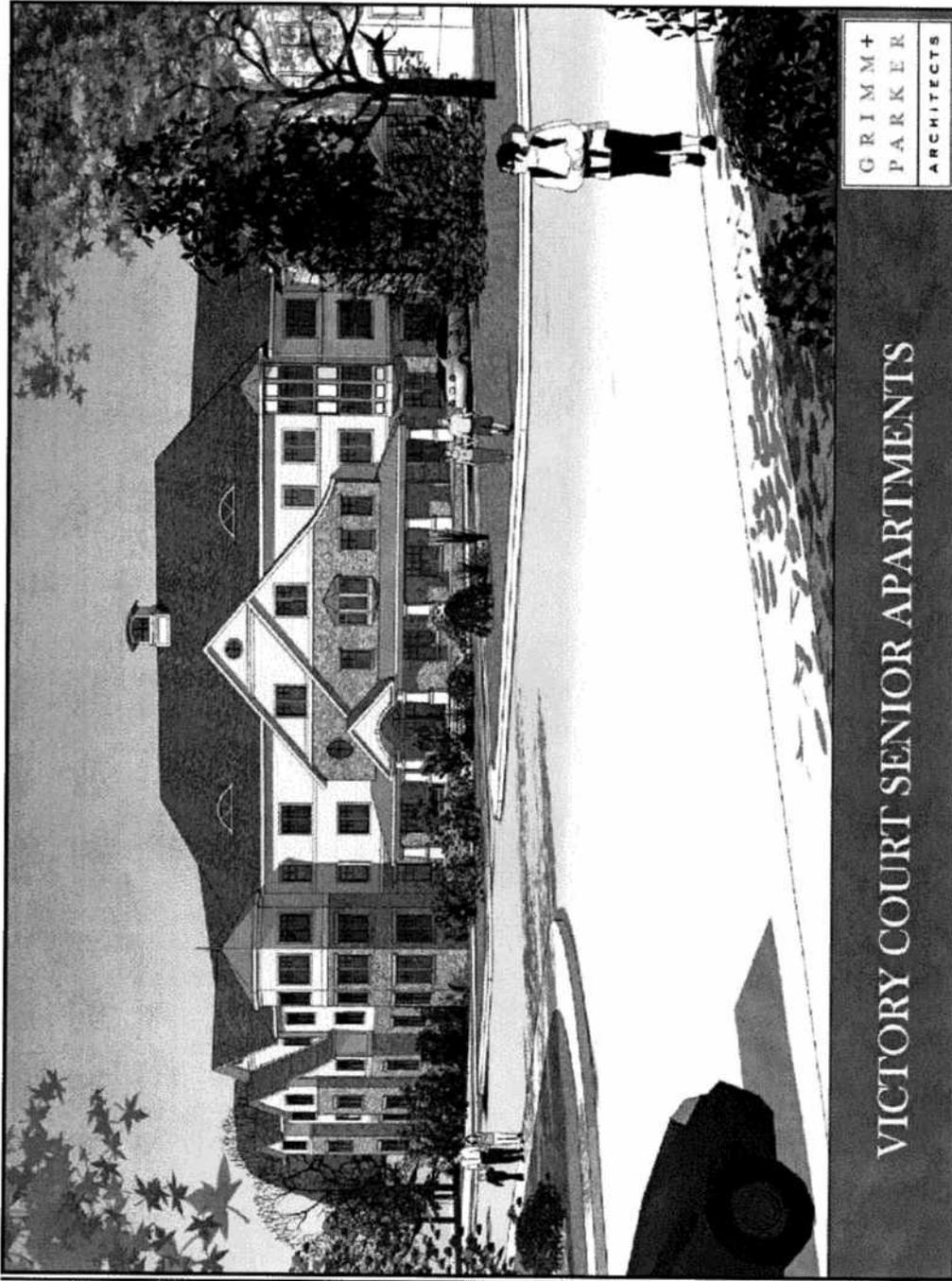
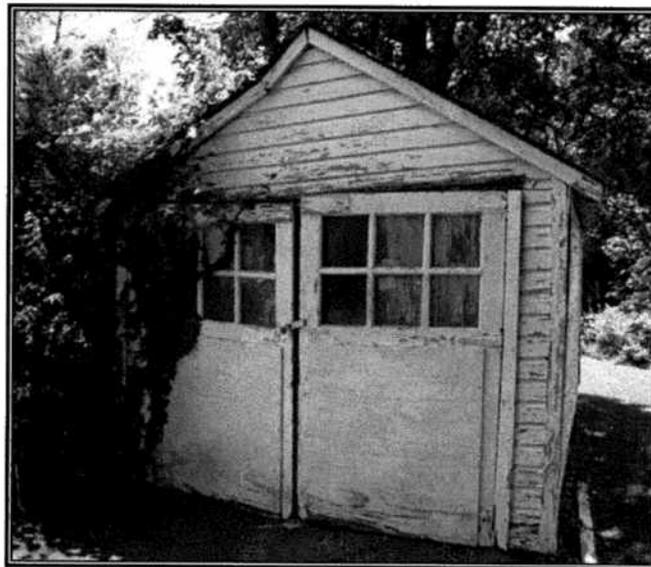


EXHIBIT C



150 Maryland Avenue Garage



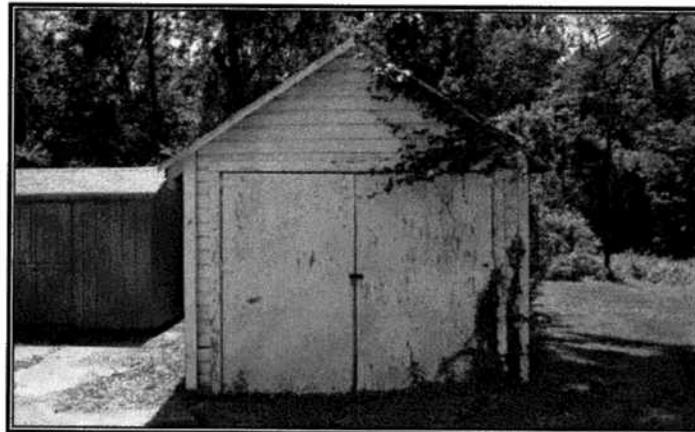
101 Fleet Street Garage
Damaged roof, deteriorated exterior, doors falling off hinges



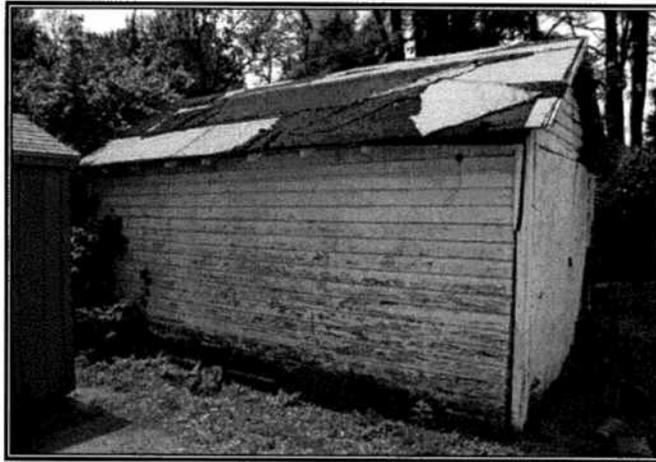
Garage Overwhelmed By Vegetation



Significant Roof Damage to Garage at 101 Fleet Street



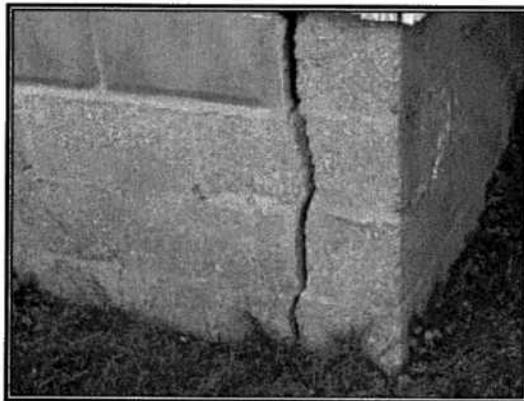
Garage at 103 Fleet Street Without Original Doors



Garage at 103 Fleet Street – Roof Damage



150 Maryland Avenue Garage



Garage Foundation Cracks



Rotten Boards on Garage



Garage Roof Damage