

Submitted: August 20, 2009  
September 17, 2009

Approved:

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Thursday, July 16, 2009  
Meeting No. 6-2009

Historic District Commissioners present: Max van Balgooy (Chair), Craig Moloney, Janet Hunt McCool, Jeremy Tucker

Staff present: Robin Ziek, Preservation Planner; Jim Wasilak, Chief of Planning

**V. EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**A. HDC2009-00470** (Postponed from 6/18/09 at applicant's request)

Applicant: Eva I. Chow

Address: 23 Paca Place, Hungerford

Request: Evaluation in response to Demolition Permit submittal

Staff Ziek presented the staff report. The property is a "Twinbrook Ranch" located in Hungerford. It was constructed by Donald Gingery and J. Wesley Buchanan, and exemplifies the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century suburban growth of Rockville. Donald Gingery was also a partner in the Twinbrook developments, and used the Levittown design for a mass-produced Modern Home in his developments. The property at 23 Paca Place has a high level of integrity and exemplifies this important aspect of Rockville's history.

Commissioner McCool asked if Levittown had been designated historic, and staff indicated that it has not, although there has been a lot of literature published on its historic significance. Commissioner Moloney asked how many homes were included in Hungerford, and staff indicated 650 homes. Staff noted that the "turn-key" development was a departure from earlier developments where the developer was only responsible for the plat and the infrastructure. Post World War II development included federal involvement with support for design, financing, and advertising. Asked about the significance of an individual house where there are 600 similar houses, staff noted that this aspect of similarity was a key aspect of historic significance. This contributed to the streetscape in the community, and each house was an important component of that community.

Eva Chow, the owner, testified that she felt that this house did not qualify as "historic" because it was a copy of Levittown and not the original. She asked why, if alterations were permitted on historic properties, any house would be designated because it had not been altered. The Chair responded that the HDC could assure sensitive additions that

supported the historic character. She noted that there was no front door, no basement, no energy efficiency, and the house was so old. She has owned the property for five years, and has been working with Stanley Martin on the design of a new house. She proposes to construct a new 2-story colonial-style house. Staff noted that the HDC really doesn't consider proposed replacement structures, but limits their evaluation to the existing structure.

Commissioner Tucker concurred with the staff report. Commissioner McCool noted that she had lived in a house in Twinbrook and made significant renovations to make it more livable. Chair van Balgooy noted that it has always been difficult to evaluate more recent homes. He noted that not very long ago, bungalows and Victorian homes were torn down as lacking historic significance. He noted that energy efficiency can be achieved in older homes, and that "property rights" applies to the neighbors as well, in consideration of the impacts of demolition on the overall community.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Tucker proposed recommending historic district re-zoning of the property at 23 Paca Court, citing Criteria I-B and I-C, and II-A. Commissioner Moloney seconded.

**VOTE:** 3-1 (Commissioner McCool opposed) Motion Passed

Staff noted that they will try to move this forward quickly, and circulate a draft recommendation to the Mayor and Council next week, and schedule it for the Authorization to File by the Mayor and Council in September.