

Cleveland Park Citizens Association

050307-1 Resolution on the Tregaron Partnership Development Application at the Historic Preservation Review Board Hearing of February 24, 2005

Adopted by the CPCA Executive Committee on February 23, 2005, and ratified by the CPCA Membership at its regular monthly meeting on March 7, 2005

The Cleveland Park Citizens Association firmly opposes the Tregaron Partnership's housing development proposal for the Tregaron Estate.

The estate was designed by renowned architect Charles Platt and renowned landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman. Their collaboration resulted in a work that remains largely intact, with its mansion, natural woodlands, grassy green spaces, stonework, paths, and bridges—the only remaining intact Shipman landscape in Washington. Platt's original design concept was that the buildings and grounds be read as a single unit. As explained in the report of landscape architecture historian Thaisa Way, the current proposal by the Tregaron Partnership would destroy major elements of the historic landscape architecture, including parts that may even predate the Shipman plan—both the bridle path and the Olmstead design for Klingle Road.

Clearly, the development proposed by the Tregaron Partnership does not meet the legal criteria of the preservation law, as it does not “retain and enhance” the historic landmark. Because this landmark's designation, unlike most, includes the whole grounds, and is based in large measure on the specifics of the landscape architecture, it is impossible for housing to be placed on the land without a least partial destruction of that landscape architecture. It would violate the very heart of the Historic Protection Act to allow a housing project in such a location.

There are many places in the District of Columbia where houses can be built. Tregaron is surely the archetypal example of the wrong place to do it.

We urge the Board to bring this matter to an honorable end by declaring with finality that neither this, nor any, housing project on this land can possibly meet the standard established by law, that is, the “retain and enhance” the historic landmark.