CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
for
June 18, 2009
MEETING NO. 5-09

APPLICATION: **HDC2009-00470**

ADDRESS: **23 Paca Place**

ACCEPTED: **April 27, 2009**

OWNER: **Eva Chow**
[Steve Solomons, Agent)

REQUEST: **Evaluation of Significance,**
Respond to Demolition Permit

STAFF: **Robin D. Ziek**

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The applicant requests Evaluation of Significance review by HDC, a step in the Demolition Permit application process, as noted in Article 25.14.01.d.1.(c) of the City's Zoning Ordinance.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the following findings: The property meets Criteria I-B and C; and II-A.

I-B: Donald Gingery was one of the major figures in the mid-20th century suburban development of Rockville, including Hungerford Towne.

I-C: The property is associated with the mid-20th century suburban development of Rockville. Twinbrook, Hungerford Towne, and Stoneridge were all developed by Donald Gingery and J. Wesley Buchanan

II-A: The property exemplifies the modern mass produced housing developed after World War II, and has stylistic affinity with Twinbrook, and Levittown (in New York).

The house retains features associated with the seven aspects of integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association).

[DRAFT MOTION OF EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE:]
Finding HDC2009-00470, Evaluation of Historic Significance, that the property at 23 Paca Place exemplifies the mid-20th century Modern Home built in Rockville in the period of suburban expansion when the veterans came home after World War II. It is associated with a key developer, Donald Gingery, who was instrumental in the construction of over 3,000 homes in

Rockville, with the developments of Hungerford Towne, Twinbrook, and Stoneridge. The property retains a high level of integrity to convey its historic significance. Therefore, I move to recommend historic designation of the property.

BACKGROUND:

A demolition permit was received at the City of Rockville on April 27, 2009. As provided in the City of Rockville's Zoning Ordinance 25.14.d.(c), when a demolition permit is filed, the HDC shall consider the application to determine if the property meets the adopted City of Rockville Historic District Designation Criteria. If the HDC finds that the property does **not** meet the Criteria, HDC staff will sign off on the demolition permit. If the HDC finds that the property **does** meet the Criteria, it will make a written recommendation that the Mayor and Council rezone the property to the Historic District Zone. The Mayor and Council may or may not authorize filing of a sectional map amendment for historic rezoning.

North (front elevation) East (side elevation)

North and East elevations East elevation Roofs

The house is located at the corner of Paca Place and East Jefferson Street. Paca Place is a cul-de-sac, and the west side of the house faces East Jefferson, while the north side, or front, faces Paca Place. The front door, however, is on the west side of the house, protected with a side roof. The house is characterized by multiple roof levels, a variety of windows, use of the "picture window" in the major public space, and the setting within a garden setting.

The property includes a concrete driveway, leading to the front door covered area. The yard is fenced to the south of the house, but open along the street frontage.

The other homes in the neighborhood illustrate the sense of both variety and sameness that was achieved in the development. Presence or absence of shutters, differing window configurations with bow or flush windows, and presence or absence of dormers are aspects of the variety of homes in the neighborhood. The texture and scale of the homes, however, are similar, and the neighborhood has a sense of homogeneity.

Some homes along Paca Place

Many of the homes have had additions or alterations. This has also been widely described as one of the elements in the conception of the developments modeled after Levittown. [See Twinbrook digital files on the Peerless Rockville web site for papers that describe the architectural styles and the element of remodeling [www.peerlessrockville.org/projects/Twinbrook/Twinbrook.htm].

Hungerford Section 1 Block 4, Lot 31

Property Area: 7,666 sf **Structure Area:** 858 sf

Zone: R-60 (Single Dwelling Unit Residential)

Development Standards: [see Circle 18-19]

City of Rockville Permits Required: Demolition Permit, Building Permit

History

The subject property is located in Hungerford, formerly identified as "Hungerford Towne," a residential neighborhood west of Rockville Pike and south of Richard Montgomery High School. The neighborhood was platted in eleven Sections, and the subject property is in Section One.

Hungerford was once part of the Dawson family's farm, Rocky Glen. The farm included ca. 500 acres and, in today's geography, extended from Rockville Pike to I-270, and from Edmonston Drive to Monroe Street. Four generations of Dawsons farmed here from 1840 through 1979. However, by the 1950s, they began to sell off parts of the farm for income. A deed recorded in 1954 (L1950/69) documents a sale of 223 acres of land from widowed Helen Dawson and family to the Dawson Farm Land Development Company, Inc., of which Donald E. Gingery was the President, and W. Evans Buchanan was the Secretary.

Development of the property was stalled when the State served an injunction on construction in Rockville because of the health concerns due to over-taxing the City's existing water and sewer system with the explosive suburban growth that occurred after World War II. Within days, the City agreed to build new water and sewer lines, connecting to the Potomac and to WSSC's Cabin John Branch trunk sewer line [McGuckian, p. 138]. Gingery was allowed to proceed with construction in Hungerford by agreeing to pay for sewer facilities for the first two hundred homes [McGuckian, p. 141].

Hungerford Towne was laid out in an irregular pattern that responded to local topography and followed the contours of the land. The neighborhood was purposefully insulated from through traffic, with minimal connections to the large-scale roads such as Rockville Pike. The design of the homes was heavily influenced by the development of Levittown, in New York. Levittown has been much documented, as the highly influential development that drew on rapid construction techniques applied during World War II, and refined by Levitt & Sons, Inc. The first homes built by Levitt &

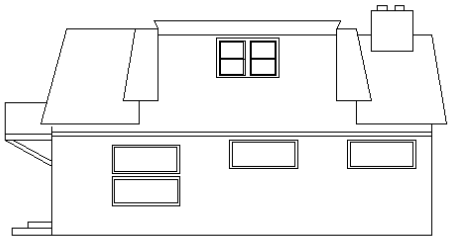
Sons, Inc. were small Cape Cods, in the Colonial Revival style tradition. However, they soon moved towards a Modern vocabulary, with asymmetrical roofs and side or corner entry. Houses were typically turned to provide contrast on the street, even as the same house model might be used.

103 Bloomingdale Road, Levittown

Donald Gingery was familiar with Levittown, and drew on the Levittown style homes for his own developments in Rockville. The subject property is a Levittown Ranch Type C (1949-1959), according to the Twinbrook typology developed through a survey of Twinbrook by the City of Rockville [see also history and significance of Twinbrook, Circle 20-24].

Type B

- 1 ½ stories
- Attic meant to be expanded, and often unfinished
- Shed dormer interrupts eave line
- Multiple, rectangular windows, sliding square windows
- Variety of exterior materials
- Entrance found on side or front of house



509 Calvin/ Lane 1959

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT and MATERIALS:

Hungerford has approximately 650 homes. Cul-de-sacs are typical, and provided essentially private streets within the neighborhood. The house at 23 Paca Place is a good example of the private homes built in Hungerford Towne. It evidences a high level of integrity in terms of massing, materials, and design.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS (see Circle 6-9):

I-B: Is identified with a person [Donald Gingery] who influenced society. In this case, Donald Gingery worked with different partners and contributed overall to the rapid expansion of Rockville in the mid-20th century.

I-C: The property exemplifies mid-twentieth century suburban development, which was supported at the federal level with design and financing legislation aimed at the promotion of private homes to a broad population.

II-A: The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Modern Home constructed in this period. These homes were a design shift away from the Colonial Revival Style of the first half of the 20th century.