

2007 APR 30 PM 1:54

April 27, 2007

VIA EMAIL AND US MAIL

Gibraltar
c/o Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs
21 The Green
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Sir/Madam:

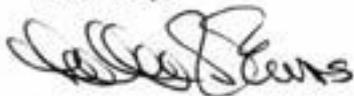
I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed amendment to the existing conservation easement on the Gibraltar Estate in the City of Wilmington. You will set a dangerous precedent if you approve the proposed amendment. You may encourage other holders of conservation easements to apply for similar changes. At the same time, you may discourage future property from being placed under conservation easement as the property holder would have no guarantee that any such easement would be upheld.

In effect, if you allow the proposed amendment, you will eviscerate the conservation easement as a device through which to effectively protect historic property and important scenic areas within our state. Communities are defined in many ways, but a community that fails to protect some of the physical features that link those who live here now with those who came before us eventually loses itself.

Gibraltar is located in an area that is currently under intense pressure from developers who are systematically removing the features that made this an attractive area in which to live: Columbus Inn, Bancroft Mills and the Kentmere Parkway (the development on the former Siena Hall site) have already fallen victim. Venerated historic features are being forever altered by separate developers. Many neighbors have worked very hard to preserve what they hold most dear, but they are fighting different developers, each of whom has his own deep pockets. We desperately need a comprehensive plan for historic preservation. However, until we get to that point, we certainly need to be able to rely on measures already in place, like the conservation easement, to help us preserve what we hold dear.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



HEATHER RICHARDS EVANS

From: Adrian Fine
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 3:12 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Subject: Gibraltar, National Trust comments

Please find attached a letter of support from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for the proposed amendments to the Gibraltar Conservation Easement.

Adrian Scott Fine | Director | Northeast Field Office (DE, NJ & PA) | National Trust for Historic Preservation |

Are you a National Trust member? Have you visited our historic sites, stayed in one of our historic hotels or taken one of our study tours? Learn more at www.nationaltrust.org. Are you a member of our Northeast monthly e-news? If not, you're missing out on timely stories, updates and deadlines. Contact us to be added to the distribution list.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Trust was founded in 1949 and provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Its Washington, DC headquarters staff, six regional, two field offices and 28 historic sites work with the Trust's 270,000 members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states. For more information, visit the Trust's web site at www.nationaltrust.org.

NORTHEAST
OFFICE



NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION

April 30, 2007

Tim Slavin
Delaware Historic Preservation Office
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs
21 The Green
Dover, DE 19901

Re: Gibraltar, Wilmington, DE

Dear Tim,

I am writing on behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in regards to the proposed amendments to the Gibraltar Conservation Easement. In working closely with Preservation Delaware, Inc., the National Trust is aware of the efforts that have led to the current reuse proposal for Gibraltar and the constraints that call for the amendments to the easement. We believe these changes are necessary to allow Gibraltar to be saved, rehabilitated and successfully adapted for a new, appropriate use.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation works closely with our statewide preservation partners and values their important role in building the preservation movement nationally. Sometimes preservation organizations have to take important stands in order to protect threatened historic places. Gibraltar is a good example, as one of Wilmington's last great historic estates. In 1995, owners were prepared to sell the estate to developers who planned to build townhouses on the land.

When Preservation Delaware, Inc. took the courageous steps to participate in a lead role in the purchase and saving of Gibraltar, it was a three-year-old struggling organization. It was a gutsy and commendable action. Had it not been for Preservation Delaware's effort, the Gibraltar site as we now know it may not have been here today.

Since Preservation Delaware took on the Gibraltar project in 1997, they have successfully raised about \$2 million to restore the Marion Cruger Coffin-designed gardens and guarantee their ongoing care and maintenance through an endowment. Rescuing the Gibraltar Mansion has proved much more difficult. With an initial goal of

Protecting the Irreplaceable



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reusing the Mansion as a B&B with some new construction on site, Preservation Delaware, Inc. worked with two well-respected developers. Unfortunately both were unable to secure financing and pulled out of the project.

In a third attempt to find a developer for the Gibraltar Mansion, Preservation Delaware, Inc. took a more flexible approach and considered all options -- provided proposals meet historic preservation standards, are financially feasible, and are compatible for the overall site. CCS submitted the only financially sustainable plan providing for the preservation of the site. As envisioned and financed, the project by CCS will rehabilitate the Gibraltar Mansion and provide a long-term use that can be sustained. More important, the project will not require the use of public subsidies such as grants from the State or other already-strained municipalities. The gardens will remain under Preservation Delaware, Inc.'s control and will be partially sustained by an annual revenue stream of \$30,000 from CCS. In addition, Gibraltar's significant, primary open space will be retained, as required by the easement held by the State.

The Gibraltar Mansion has deteriorated over the past ten years while developers have come and gone in the pursuit of reuse options. To rescue and rehabilitate Gibraltar, a significant investment is required, estimated at approximately \$5 million. To sustain this level of investment, and provide for continuing maintenance of the Mansion, the adaptive reuse must provide income. The plan by CCS appears to achieve this goal. As this dilemma faces thousands of historic sites nationally, the Gibraltar project, once completed, may become a model for how to reuse and sustain challenging historic sites.

For ten years, Preservation Delaware, Inc. has been working hard to save this historic site, the gardens, the open space and the mansion through an adaptive reuse. They have done this even when it has overwhelmed them as an organization and limited their ability to fulfill their overall statewide mission. The success or failure of Gibraltar will now also directly determine the future of Preservation Delaware, Inc.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has fully reviewed the proposed amendments to the Gibraltar Conservation Easement. We are confident that there has been an exhaustive effort to consider any and all reuse options that are financially viable and appropriate for this site. Lengthy negotiations between Preservation Delaware, Inc. and CCS and the community have addressed issues of design, new construction, parking, traffic, archaeology and the site plan.

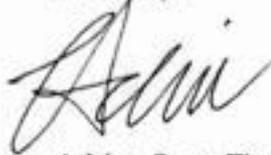
We are all stewards of this heritage and try to pass it on to future generations in a manner that maintains historic continuity. The Gibraltar Mansion has languished too long without a use and with exposure to the elements now putting it at serious risk. Based on our personal understanding of the issues, long history with this site and ongoing efforts to explore all alternatives, the National Trust for Historic Preservation is confident that the CCS project is an appropriate way to save Gibraltar. The proposed amendments

April 30, 2007
Gibraltar, Wilmington, DE
Page 3

to the Gibraltar Conservation Easement are a key aspect for making this project viable and able to proceed.

Thank you for your consideration as the National Trust for Historic Preservation appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrian", written in a cursive style.

Adrian Scott Fine
Director, Northeast Field Office

cc: Preservation Delaware, Inc.
Mary Jane Elliott, DE Advisor
Joni Hazelton, DE Advisor
Peter Brink, NTHP

From:

Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 4:54 PM

To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar

To whom it may concern,

I would like to add my voice to the overwhelming number of people who oppose the changes to Gibraltar. Having lived in this area for 50 of my 58 years, I and my family treasure this neighborhood for its STABILITY, charm and diversity. The proposals for Gibraltar - on top of the changes that will come from the Rockford Falls and Columbus Inn projects will have a serious effect on our area. I do not understand how a small restaurant can be denied a permit based on "neighborhood opposition" and yet three extensive projects get approval despite intense opposition. Sadly, what I do understand is that the short term greed of a few can triumph over long term common sense and planning that ultimately affect so many.

Margaret Gielis

W

From: Alfred Guaraldo
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 2:05 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Subject: Support for the Easement amendment request

As a property owner since 1993 in _____, which is adjacent to the Gibraltar site and which was once part of the site/estate, we have supported several concepts to preserve the Mansion and grounds over the past thirteen (13) years. None of the concepts have progressed past the idea stage due to the economic considerations required to rehabilitate/preserve the Mansion, given its state of (dis)repair, along with historic protection, and the need to have an additional income producing, yet neighborhood compatible, structure of sufficient size and reasonable scale.

Reasonable commercial development of the site was addressed in 1997 and 2000 at which time the issue of commercial use versus residential use was settled. The current Grantor employed a RFP process to select a responsive development group to present a plan for the site, inclusive with preservation of the Mansion and maintenance of the Gardens. And, in 2006, the City of Wilmington Board of Adjustment confirmed, via a zoning variance, the use and concept that an addition of 3500 square feet to the existing conservation easement of 6500 square feet for new construction in the northeast corner of the property behind the eight foot high stone walls and at a relative roofline level with existing structures in the lower area to be in character with the neighborhood, given the development plan/materials for a free standing low rise office structure with underground and surface parking.

Approval of the 2007 Easement amendment, will allow for the development required to ensure preservation of the Mansion (and the Gardens) while sustaining the open space within a reasonable and economically viable framework through private enterprise with oversight by the Department of State.

The current development proposal for the site seems to have the best chance of success versus the previous ones and given the reasonability of the request coupled with the support of the Grantor, please accept our support of the 2007 Gibraltar Conservation amendment request.

Alfred M Guaraldo

From: Nathan Hayward III
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 9:41 AM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Cc:
Subject: Request for Amendment to Recorded Conservation Easement
Importance: High

To Tim Slavin:

Dear Tim -

I realize that the request by Preservation Delaware ("PDI") to amend the Gibraltar Conservation Easement has raised a lot of opposition. It should. And I join those who firmly believe that the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs should deny PDI's request.

As you may know I helped Governor (then Senator) Minner write the Delaware land Protection Act which was adopted into law in 1989. Among other things, that Act created the Open Space Council on which I have served continuously since its inception in 1990. The Council spent a great deal of time discussing this project, and I joined members of the Council, PDI, and interested legislators in a field tour of the property to get a complete sense of PDI's request, and future changes in the neighborhood.

The Council approved the expenditure of substantial state funds (I recall it was \$1 million or more) on the express condition that the house would be re-habilitated as a bed and breakfast, the gardens would be restored, and that only single family houses would be built on the adjoining property. PDI's request flies in the face of well documented and thoroughly discussed options to save both the physical property and to protect the character of the neighborhood.

Any effort by the state at this point to undo those terms would be tantamount to returning the project *de novo* to our Council for reconsideration. If the Council was unwilling to acceded to PDI's request, that organization would be obliged to repay the state's investment, a financial obligation I know it is neither able, nor desirous to do. The Council acted in good faith a number of years ago to make some concessions on this project, but also to hold the line on certain issues. If you check with Rose Ryodi at DNREC, she can find the minutes of that meeting. I believe you will see the motion was adopted unanimously.

P. Gerald White has written a very professional statement opposing PDI's request. Rather than repeat his points here, let me just say that I thoroughly support his

views.

I'd be happy to talk with you at any time. Don't hesitate to give me a call at

With my best regards.

Nathan Hayward III

From: Martin, John W.
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 10:03 AM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Subject: Easement Amendment

I am writing in support of the proposed amendment. It would be appropriate to reduce the size of the allowance for the mansion addition, as it is not desired and creates an impression of undesirable impacts to the building. While changing the easement is not without controversy, it represents thoughtful compromise that will ensure preservation of the mansion, garden, and most of the grounds. These are the exact reasons that the easement was entered into originally.

The potential developers of the property, CCS, have worked very hard to minimize impacts to the property including a reduction in the height of the additional building proposed in a portion of the property used for dumping and parking. Their efforts are to be commended and seek to restore this National Register property to its appropriate status. The proposed adaptive reuse of the property is in keeping with the real-world nature of large historic properties.

In an ideal world, protection of the property with a conservation easement would not be necessary. Changes to the current easement are not to be taken lightly, but should also be viewed in the context of complete loss – a very likely outcome if the easement is not amended. This would represent a tragedy for everyone, especially the holders of the easement. Again, I favor changing the easement as proposed (with the aforementioned change) and look forward to the restoration of this important historic resource and demonstration of how such agreements can work for everybody's benefit.

John W. Martin, RPA

From: Kim
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 2:42 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Subject: don't lose this wonderful landmark

I'd like to voice my opinion in not building office spaces at Gilbralter. I love the gardens and visit regularly. I would hate to lose this space as is on the grounds.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Merkl

From: Linda Outlaw
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 8:47 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Subject: Support of Gibraltar Amendment

To Whom It May Concern:

I am both a neighbor and volunteer of Gibraltar and would like to add my name in support of the proposed amendment to the conservation easement. The approval of this easement actually strengthens and preserves the protection of the site, allowing the garden and frontage along Pennsylvania Avenue to remain open space.

The current plans to build a 10,000 sf office building actually includes the construction of two buildings with a connecting hallway. The architectural drawings look like two homes and the roof lines appear to be no higher than others in the neighborhood. Actually, the ground that this extended building will occupy is currently overgrown with weeds and is a collection spot for cuttings and leaves. In addition, there now exists parking along Greenhill Avenue behind the existing building.

This plan is financially feasible for the developers, unlike other plans such as those for Bed and Breakfasts. It will restore the mansion, provide operating funds for the garden for thirty years and maintain the open space that we currently all enjoy. Unlike the nearby Columbus Inn project, this development will be no more intrusive than the development of homes which is adjacent to Gibraltar on its north side.

I urge you to grant the proposed amendment to the conservation easement.

Sincerely,
Linda N. Outlaw

From: Sol Peltz
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 10:54 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Subject: Gibraltar

Importance: High

My wife and I ask you not to allow PDI's requested changes. We expect the State to uphold its obligation to "preserve and protect in perpetuity" the entire Gibraltar property "for the benefit of this generation and generations to come" as stated in the original Conservation Easement. We also request that ask the HCA to uphold its mission of fostering community stability by retaining the residential character of The Highlands neighborhood.

Sincerely yours,
Sol and Bev Peltz

From: Terry Priebe
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 3:18 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Cc:

Subject: Gibraltar

Please add our names to those in opposition to changing the Easement.

We commend and agree with the observations and conclusions of Mr. P. Gerald White as communicated to the "Interested Parties" about Gibraltar.

Gibraltar is a tremendous long-term asset to our larger community and requires wise stewardship.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Terry R. Priebe

RECEIVED
DELAWARE STATE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION OFFICE

To whom it may concern:

2007 APR 30 PM 1:54

I am writing in support of granting the proposed amendment to the conservation easement for the restoration and rehabilitation of the Gibraltar property – formerly the family home of one of Delaware's most significant families.

As a volunteer and fund raiser for the Marion Coffin Gardens at Gibraltar I am urging you to pass this amendment so that CCS can move forward on protecting this historic site and giving it new vitality in our community. This partnership with CCS has been the only viable plan that we have seen in 9 years. This developer has developed a plan which maintains the current rooflines of existing buildings, can and will restore the mansion, and has, with due diligence, addressed the concerns of the neighborhood. I have taken interest in their other projects i.e. Walker's Farm in Hockessin. They worked to maintain a business in keeping with the surrounding community by improving the existing site, but not changing its essence.

Conservation of this historic property is a must. To allow it to go to ruin would reflect poorly on our whole community. Preservation Delaware simply does not have the financial resources to continue being the caretaker of this Wilmington property.

Please grant this proposed amendment to this conservation easement so that we can all move forward and save one of our city's treasures and making it a vital part of our community again.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Smith
April 27, 2007

From:
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 10:30 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Cc:
Subject: Oppose Gibraltar Conservation Easement changes

Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs:

I would like to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to the Conservation Easement for the Gibraltar property at Pennsylvania and Greenhill Avenues in Wilmington.

The easement was meant to preserve open space for generations to come, and to help maintain the residential nature of the neighborhood. Changing the easement to accommodate the needs of a developer to construct a commercial office building is counter-productive to the intent of the conservation easement. The changes would have a negative impact on the neighborhood and set the wrong precedent for dealing with changes in easements in the future.

The proposed changes are a significant change to the original easement and I believe should be denied. Thank you for your consideration

Mike Soltys

See what's free at AOL.com.

From:
Sent: Tuesday, May 01, 2007 3:39 PM
To: doscha_gibraltar@state.de.us
Cc:
Subject: Gibraltar

I am writing in support of the Conservation Easement Agreement for Gibraltar. Anything to save the situation. We live nearby, and it is sad to see buildings and land becoming ever more delapidated. Preserving both is important to this area and beyond. Charlotte Bonmartini

See what's free at AOL.com.

From: David Brown
Sent: Tuesday, May 01, 2007 8:09 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Subject: Comments on Gibraltar conservation easement

Dear Members of the HCA and SHPO

I am writing to ask you not to approve the proposed amendment to the conservation easement on the Gibraltar property, as submitted by Preservation Delaware, Inc.

Many people living in the immediate vicinity of Gibraltar feel that what PDI is proposing – allowing a commercial development to be built in an established residential neighborhood - is inappropriate and would be damaging to the community. Gibraltar is worth saving, but not by potentially ruining the community that surrounds it.

Other letter-writers will have gone over some of the background to this issue, including

- the lack of any genuine consultation between PDI and the community about the choice of this developer's proposal
- the \$1m of State money that has been put into Gibraltar (and thus, if this amendment is approved, effectively into the hands of the developers)
- the size of the proposed commercial development (greater than the house it is designed to save), and
- the radical redefinition of Conservation Values in the proposed amendment, which sets out "primary" and "secondary" areas in a quite unilateral way, and grants the developers huge freedom to further develop the "secondary" areas.

I do not wish to rehearse those points further, except to say that, as I live right opposite Gibraltar and have done for 5 years, I am especially distressed about the first of them.

However, I would ask you to consider your mission as the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, and evaluate how consistent it is with the Amended and Restated Conservation Easement on Gibraltar. A key part of your aim is "fostering community stability and economic vitality". Allowing a sizeable commercial development in the heart of a residential community might be fostering economic vitality - or it might not. In small towns like Wilmington, the commercial real estate market is volatile, and there is no guarantee that the high-end tenants sought by the developers would be forthcoming. What if, instead of the developer's professed desire for 75 lawyers, the ultimate tenants - not now, maybe, not next year, but 5 or 10 years from now - are 200 telemarketers? I leave the consequences, for the neighborhood and for Gibraltar, to your imagination. What an approval of this amended easement would certainly not be doing is fostering community stability.

I am sure that you have received many letters for the amended easement, and many against it. That should tell you how deeply divided the community is – not about preserving Gibraltar, which pretty much everyone wants – but about *this specific means of achieving it*. The community deserves a solution that will not rip it apart and set neighbor against neighbor. For that reason, and considering your mission, I urge you to reject the proposed changes to the Conservation Easement.

Help us find a better way to save Gibraltar.

David Brown

From: susannah thomer
Sent: Tuesday, May 01, 2007 1:10 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Subject: gibraltar preservation

Mr. Brown has asked that I email his statement to you.
Thank you.

I am deeply concerned about the future of the important property in Wilmington known as Gibraltar that was long the residence of one of the state's leading citizens. I have been chairman of the board of a major historical property in Philadelphia known as Wyck which was home for nine generations of the Haines family. I have been on the board of the Chestnut Hill Historical Society as well as a member of the National Trust. I am also involved with Hagley, Winterthur, the Brandywine Conservancy and Nemours. Gibraltar is another Delaware property that requires our special care and attention. It is a unique property with important historic provenance and is a great asset as it stands to the city and state. Every effort should be made to preserve and restore this historic asset. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Robert DePue Brown

Dear Mr. Slavin

Recd
5.1.07
TMB

All my residences have been within a two minute drive of Gibraltar, my most recent (for the last seven years) being

I am also akin to the family that originally sold this property to Preservation Delaware, as well as to the family proposing to restore and improve said property.

Over the last seven years, in particular, I have taken frequent walks around the grounds and throughout the garden. Preservation Delaware has done a remarkable job of restoring beauty and integrity to the gardens. However, the mansion and the rest of the buildings have deteriorated quickly and almost irreparably. We are all aware of Trent Margit and the PO Board's tireless efforts to attract a business to resurrect Gibraltar.

Finally, CCS comes along, having a good track record of quality restorations, in addition to a family sense of going the extra miles to bring the estate back

to its proper historical significance. There is still enough space on the property for a discretely designed office building that will generate income to offset CCS's investment.

I strongly feel the big complaint of excessive traffic can be no worse than the steady stream of cars on Greenhill Avenue at school and work hours.

Trent and the Preservation Delaware Board have been entrusted to PRESERVE Gibraltar. CCS is willing to make that investment. This proposal, and the incredible amount of time the group has spent communicating with the community gives me the full confidence to support them.

Considering the alternative of allowing Gibraltar to decay further, and leave it at a point of no return would be tragic and unconscionable.

Phoebe Craver

From: Tuesday, May 01, 2007 4:00 PM
Sent: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
To:
Cc:

Subject: Gibraltar

I am writing to you to voice my opposition to the proposed office park at Gibraltar. I am a resident of the Highlands Community and have lived there for the past 7 1/2 years. The charm of the Highlands Community is its historic homes and the stable community. This area has only continued to improve while I have lived here. The people are warm and friendly and love being part of this community.

I am upset with the recent decision to build condominiums at the Columbus Inn since it was a place that my family enjoyed walking to from our home for a nice evening out. Now, it will be yet another high rise; devoid of the charm that once was the Columbus Inn where families celebrated momentous occasions. I am also upset with the proposed construction and alteration of our Highland Community at Gibraltar.

This community is a residential community and not suitable for more office or retail space. The alteration of Gibraltar into an office (or retail) park would be very detrimental to this community. There is already a lot of traffic that cuts through our neighborhood in order to get to the downtown part of the city rather than sit in traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue.

It is also my understanding that \$1 million of DNREC's Open Space Council funds purchased a conservation easement to protect the Gibraltar Estate from development with the purpose to assure that the Property will be retained forever in its scenic and open condition. It is also my understanding that Preservation Delaware, Inc. did very little to consult with nearby residents on this proposal. What has Preservation Delaware told the residents on how it will minimize the impact on the community and the surrounding property owner's home values?

The commercial intrusion into the heart our community has to stop. There are other more suitable sites as well as numerous empty sites that could be used for a proposed office park. It also seems unclear what this space will be used for in the future which could lead to future destabilization of the community.

I hope to continue being a resident of this community and the City of Wilmington. I want to see the City of Wilmington and Gibraltar continue to thrive and be upkeep; however, there has to be further discussion with the community on this proposed project and an alternative proposal that would protect the preservation of Gibraltar as well as benefit the community and its families.

Please do not allow PDI's requested changes.

Sincerely,

Diane J. Drake

From: Christopher Gropp
Sent: Tuesday, May 01, 2007 6:08 AM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Cc: Brady Gerald (LegHall); McDowell Harris (LegHall)
Subject: Gibraltar

To HCA/Preservation Delaware,

I am absolutely shocked that this new project is planned for Gibraltar. The area's residents have been promised a preserved Gibraltar and ten years later there has been no credible effort made to live up to this promise. Gibraltar represents a real opportunity for the city and state to add a legitimate historical landmark for visitors and residents, instead you want to waste this potential in order to build office space when there is currently ample space available.

You supposedly help preserve our historical interests, I suggest you start following your charter or at least make a better effort to pretend.

Regards,
Chris Gropp

RECEIVED
DELAWARE STATE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION OFFICE

2007 MAY -1 AM 11:55

April 30, 2007

Gibraltar
c/o Div of Historical & Cultural Affairs
21 The Green
Dover, Delaware 19901

Dear Sir or Madam,

As a long time resident of the HIGHLANDS for my 72 year, actually my family has lived on _____ for 127 years when my great-great grandfather built my house in 1880. It has been a choice area in which to live and determined to keep it as such. I am total against any attempt to try to build a commercial building basically less than 75 feet away from my residence along with parking for near 100 automobiles – just a radical departure from what the neighborhood has espoused. Those wanting to alter the neighborhood are newcomers who will try to alter our neighborhood and they moved on which is part of their history. Even real estate ads always try to pay homage to the Highlands and indicate what a choice area to live.

Frankly I believe there is sufficient space to build a few homes on the Gibraltar property but not a commercial building.

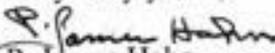
Possibly the Yankee Workshop of TV fame might be interested in rehabilitating the Gibraltar mansion.?

I can recall its glory days when Mr & Mrs H. Rodney Sharp were in residence and later their son Hugh Sharp and knew all the 30 or more in height, some who lived in houses which later became Green House Place. I recall the sheep who grazed in the entire block where the Devon Condominiums stand. Mr. Sharp's son (Hugh Bayard) sold the entire parcel to the Devon Builders.

Lastly I am totally opposed to changing the present easement. Greenhill Avenue now is almost reaching capacity for traffic and we have read of the bailout for the owner of the Columbus Inn property which will create a bottleneck of traffic with a medical building across the street – UPS and DHL deliveries during the day- taxi's waiting for patients on busy only 4 lane Pennsylvania Ave.

While I may not as an individual have much impact still I wanted to express my love and desire to keep our Highlands as is with assurance as it will keep its tranquil nicety

Very truly yours,


P. James Hahn

From: _____
Sent: Tuesday, May 01, 2007 12:28 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Subject: In support of Gibraltar redevelopment plan

I am writing in support of the Gibraltar redevelopment project. I have lived in the Highlands for more than five years, and I have watched two previous redevelopment projects fail to get off the ground. During this time, the mansion has fallen into a terrible state of disrepair and served as a magnet for vandals, vagrants and vermin. The grounds (save for the garden) have become overgrown with invasive plant species, including Tree of Heaven, Mile-a-minute vine and Canada thistle. If the property continues to fall into disrepair, renovation will never be worth investors' time and money.

The design for the new construction on the property has been undertaken with an eye towards the surrounding community. Changes to the mansion itself will be confined to areas that are not visible from public areas. The new construction will largely be shielded from view by the stone wall along Greenhill Avenue, and with appropriate landscaping, it could be virtually invisible. In addition, the exterior of the new building has been designed to complement the existing structures.

Concerns about potential loss of open space are unfounded, as the area to be impacted by new construction is currently nothing more than an overgrown mound of dirt and piles of brush. It is certainly not a public amenity.

I have seen the plans for the two previous redevelopment projects as well as those for the current plan. The previous plans, both for inn/restaurant businesses, had far greater potential for traffic congestion and noise than CCS's proposal. The fact that both of the previous projects have fallen through is evidence that a new approach was needed. CCS has put forward a carefully-researched plan which is sensitive to the nature of the property and community. If CCS needs an easement to make their plan work, I urge the SHPO to grant it. It may be Gibraltar's last chance.

Thank you for your time,

Ian Henry

From:**Sent:** Tuesday, May 01, 2007 12:23 PM**To:** DOSHCA_Gibraltar, Brady Gerald (LegHall); McDowell Harris (LegHall)**Cc:****Subject:** Concerns about Gibraltar

I live at _____ in Wilmington, _____ from the Gibraltar property. I am writing because I am concerned about the future of Gibraltar and the proposal to amend the conservation easement.

I have a Masters in Regional Planning from UNC-Chapel Hill, with a concentration in Real Estate Development and Housing. My training focused on real estate finance, public/private partnerships, utilization of tax credits, and creative development solutions. My first real job was in Historic Preservation. I have worked as a financial analyst for an international office/retail developer, and a Market Research analyst for an owner/manager of billions of dollars of investment real estate across the U.S. I love old buildings, and the renovation process.

So it is frustrating for me to live close by and watch what's going on with Gibraltar. Preservation Delaware has neglected to stabilize the buildings, allowing the mansion to deteriorate over the last 10 years. I believe the property can be saved and put to good use, but the current proposal is not a good solution for the property or the neighborhood.

I worked on two related proposals to use part of the Gibraltar property for a nonprofit school. While we were not surprised we were not chosen, I was very disappointed that PDI did not even talk to us. Our development team included members that worked on the Rodney Court and Central YMCA historic renovations, and we also enlisted Bob Powers as our historic consultant. I felt that at least we could have provided some good input and information that would have helped them in their process. Since that time, the school raised \$500,000 in grants and pledges to renovate a location, but was unable to utilize the funds due to lack of a site. The Longwood Foundation also encouraged us to request additional support, when we found a site.

Through the process of formulating the proposal, I spent a lot of time looking at the mansion and the garages, as well as the site. I toured the site with Bob Powers. I worked with the architect on concept drawings. We thought about ingress/egress, fire/safety, what could be saved, etc. This is a tough one that has only gotten tougher as the building has been left to deteriorate.

I must tell you that I am disappointed with how Preservation Delaware has handled their responsibility in taking care of the property. Neighbors with a view will tell you that they left windows and doors open, leaving the mansion exposed to the elements. I attended the party at the property in 1997, and went through the house at that time. I also went inside the house when it was open in late 2004/early 2005 as part of the RFP process. When I was at the property with Bob Powers, the roof over the conservatory was being replaced – only because it had collapsed (fall 2004?). To see the condition of the wood floors and staircases inside just makes you sick. The fact that PDI did not stabilize the building leads me to question its competency as the steward of this building. If the roof and gutters had been taken care of, and the windows and doors secured, we would not have such a huge issue on our

hands now. It's sad.

Preservation Delaware says they have involved the community, but I can tell you that, living three doors away, I heard very little from them during the process. They included a representative from the neighborhood association on their committee, but that person was apparently very limited in the information they could convey. An open process would have been more appropriate, and in my opinion would have resulted in a better development plan.

More importantly, over the years, PDI has announced plans, and nothing has ever happened. Unfortunately, I think this has resulted in apathy on the part of many neighbors. PDI has little credibility left with the neighborhood at this point. It's hard for us to believe PDI's statement that "this is the last chance for Gibraltar".

In fairness to PDI, they are a volunteer organization that is not really set up to take on a project of this magnitude. We all understand that, but does that justify putting an office building in an R-1 Single Family zone in a neighborhood of historic homes? It is ironic that the conservation easement was originally put in place to prevent development of townhouses, and now PDI is talking about amending the easement to allow construction of an office building. I'd rather have the townhouses.

The current developer and its team are obviously very astute at pushing forward with their development plans. As a planner, I sat in disbelief watching the developer's 2 ½ hour presentation for a use variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment, and I am still incredulous that this was granted. It was disappointing to hear the developer's attorney discredit a petition signed by 200 neighbors, protesting the variance application. Certainly, a proposal of this magnitude and importance was worthy of the consideration of the Planning Board itself. And it is difficult for me to understand how hardship can be shown by a nonprofit owner that was given the property at no cost.

In a private development deal without public funds or with no public interests at stake, I would view the developer's efforts as efficient and successful. But in a situation where the property was acquired with taxpayer money, with a nonprofit seller, where current zoning is not being followed, where a conservation easement is proposed for change -- we are in the realm of public/private partnership, and different standards apply.

From what I can tell, the neighbors really do want the Gibraltar property to be turned into something good and useful. There are neighbors who are ready to step up and work to find a win-win plan.

What about amending the conservation easement to allow a limited number of single family homes on the site? What about the resident curator program? What about renovating the roof, gutters, windows and doors, renovating the first floor only, and mothballing the upper floors for now? What does a historic consultant say about the current condition of the property, and what can be saved at this point? Do we know what materials must be used? Will the developer utilize the historic tax credits? There are many questions that have not been addressed.

I would be very happy to help in any way I can in brainstorming solutions, in working with the neighbors, SHPO, historic consultants, developers, whoever, to come up with a plan that works for everyone. In order to come up with a good solution, everyone will have to bend a little, but I think the process would be well worth it.

In the (hopefully) unlikely event that the conservation easement is changed, I would hope that at least the developer would be required to FIRST renovate the mansion before construction of any other building on the property. I do not want to end up with a new office building, a further-deteriorated

mansion, and a developer that later decides it cannot afford to renovate the mansion after all.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Meg Holden

From: Eldon Homsey
Sent: Tuesday, May 01, 2007 2:46 PM
To: DOSHCA_Gibraltar
Subject: GIBRALTAR

I am in favor of the Gibraltar Easement Amendment. Eldon du P. Homsey, AIA

MR. AND MRS. JEFFREY T. KUSUMI

April 30, 2007

*Hand-delivered
Reid
5.1.07
TK*

Mr. Timothy A. Slavin, State Historic Preservation Officer
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs
21 the Green, Suite B
Dover, Delaware 19901

RE: Gibraltar Conservation Easement

Dear Tim:

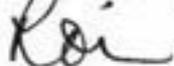
I am writing in support of the amendment to the Conservation Easement on Gibraltar as proposed by Preservation Delaware, Inc. (PDI) and presented on the State of Delaware internet web site. As you know I have served for several years now on the Board of Directors for Preservation Action, based in Washington, D.C., representing Wilmington and Delaware on the national level, albeit for grassroots historic preservation. You may also be aware that I served as a professional in the field of historic preservation for over 15 years.

It has been with great interest that I have followed the developments at Gibraltar and believe that the proposed amendments to the Conservation Easement will be a step forward for historic preservation in Delaware. Please, as our State Historic Preservation Officer, see that this Conservation Easement be amended as recommended by PDI, in order that the historically sympathetic development project planned for Gibraltar is able to proceed in sustainable fashion. The plans for Gibraltar are impressive both in their design and in their sympathetic use of the estate. I have visited other rehabilitation work done by this developer and believe that if they put the same effort into Gibraltar that they have put into their other projects, our community will be well served.

We are very fortunate that a private developer is willing to do sympathetic work at their own expense -- rather than having the rehabilitation be yet another drain on the public coffers. As a resident, a professional preservationist, and as a State of Delaware tax payer I ask that you see that this Conservation Easement Amendment is put into effect and this project proceeds as planned.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Most sincerely,



Robin Kusumi

Xc: Representative Gerald L. Brady, Sr., Legislative District 4