35/36-94D 4722 Dorset Avenue
(Somerset Historic District)

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

FAX TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Design, Zoning, and Preservation Division
(301) 495-4570 (Telephone) (301) 495-1307 (Fax Number)

TO: Candy Luria FAX NUMBER: 299-5015

FROM: Robin Zek PHONE NUMBER: 495-4570

DATE: 4-19-95

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS TRANSMITTAL SHEET: 3

NOTE:

Here's some info. I'll talk to you tomorrow if you need more - I'm out of the office for the rest of the day. Perhaps the potential owners want to call me directly?

The house at 4722 Dorset Avenue is one of the most important properties in the Somerset Historic District both for its architectural and historical significance. Built by Harvey Wiley around 1891, the house was probably the first of the original five houses built in Somerset (only three of the five remain standing today). The house is a Victorian era structure having elements of the Queen Anne style. It is a 2 1/2 story frame house with a central hipped roof. It has a mitered bay with a conical roof and wrap around porch on the North Elevation. The house is sided with beaded board siding and has fishscale shingles on the gable ends.

Dr. Wiley was one of five men from the Department of Agriculture who co-founded the town of Somerset in 1890 through their purchase of 50 acres of land. Harvey Wiley was Chief of the Bureau of Chemistry at the Department of Agriculture and was known as the "Father of the Pure Food and Drug Act". Because of the significant role that he played in this effort, Dr. Wiley has been honored by having his visage placed on a commemorative stamp. Wiley built the house in hopes of luring his parents from Indiana to live with him. Unsuccessful, he instead sold the house in 1904 to Perry and Mabel Michener. The Micheners in turn sold the property to the Ringlands in 1938.

Arthur Cuming Ringland (1882-1981) was a distinguished long time resident of Somerset. In 1945, he helped originate the concept of the private volunteer organization that became CARE. Mr. Ringland became known as "the father of CARE" and was honored by the United Nations for his efforts.

The Ringland family remained at 4722 Dorset until December of 1978, when a kitchen fire damaged the rear of the house, causing the family to move. From the time of the fire until the present, the property has been vacant.

CHRONOLOGY

In December of 1978, a kitchen fire damaged the rear of the house at 4722 Dorset Avenue.

In January of 1989, the Division of Code Enforcement of the Department of Housing and Community Development issued a Condemnation Notice on the property.

Code Enforcement reinspected and cited the property for violations under Chapter 26 of the Montgomery County Code on June 28, 1990 and again on March 8, 1991. These notices also advised the owner, Ms. Ringland, of violations for "Demolition by Neglect" under Chapter 24A.

In 1991, the applicant boarded up the majority of the window and door openings of the structure and removed many of the vines from the lot. She has attempted to keep the building boarded up, but no other significant maintenance work has been done.

On February 8, 1994, Code Enforcement sent Ms. Ringland another letter specifically citing her for violations of Chapter 24A (Demolition by Neglect), and Chapter 26 of the Montgomery County Code. This notice required the applicant to correct these violations by May 1, 1994. No additional maintenance work has been done in response to this citation.

On November 11, 1994 Staff received an application for a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) from Ms. Ringland to totally demolish her house. The submission included a letter from one architect and one structural engineer (attached).

On Thursday, November 17, and Saturday, November 19, 1994, HPC staff and Commissioners had the opportunity to visit the site. With the assistance of Ms. Ringland's representatives, the structure was examined from attic to basement.

Staff has carefully examined the damage to the building resulting from the fire and has concluded the following:

A. Fire damage to the rear of the structure, specifically the first floor rear kitchen and second floor rear bedroom (the area shown in the application to be about 22.0' x 10.6') is extensive enough that **this part of the structure is, in staff's opinion, beyond salvage and should be demolished.**

B. The cantilevered bay on the east side of the house, towards the rear, has also been severely damaged by fire. Additional damage has occurred because the windows of the room are not boarded and rain/snow has entered the building over the years. Staff feels that the condition of this small section of the house is marginal. **It may be appropriate to remove this cantilevered bay; however, this decision is not as clear-cut as the rear section described above.**

C. **The remainder of the house, although blackened by smoke and in disrepair, is not, in staff's opinion beyond a reasonable expectation of restoration.** Staff observation is that at least 75% of the exterior fabric of the structure is intact. The great majority of the framing

members are sound and the majority of the roof rafters, although some are blackened, remain structurally sound.

D. **The majority of the stone foundation is intact, not showing any indication of sagging or bowing and still retains most of its mortar.** There is some heavy mortar damage to the sides of the house nearer to the rear of the structure, but this damage is not beyond repair and repointing. This mortar erosion is probably a result of the water used to fight the fire. Inspection of the basement indicated that the damage had not infiltrated the foundation to the point of structural failure and can be remedied.

Staff feels that, except for the areas noted above, the majority of structure is completely salvageable. In fact, the building is in remarkably good structural condition, given that a major fire occurred, it has been vacant for over 15 years, and little maintenance work has been to the house done during that period.

Montgomery County Government

Historic Preservation Commission

51 Monroe Street, Suite 1001, Rockville, Maryland 20850
217-3625

APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

TAX ACCOUNT # NA / OWNER: 538078

NAME OF PROPERTY OWNER RINGLAND, D.S. TELEPHONE NO. (301) 652-4498
(Contract/Purchaser) N/A (Include Area Code)

ADDRESS 6801 WEST AVENUE CHEVY CHASE MD. 20815
CITY STATE ZIP

CONTRACTOR NA TELEPHONE NO. NA

CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION NUMBER

PLANS PREPARED BY NA TELEPHONE NO. NA
(Include Area Code)

REGISTRATION NUMBER NA

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE

House Number 4722 Street DORSET AVENUE

Town/City SOMERSET, CHEVY CHASE Election District 7 / SWD. 44

Nearest Cross Street SURREY STREET

Lot 4 Block 5 Subdivision SOMERSET HEIGHTS

Liber 5364 Folio 632 Parcel ACCOUNT # 538078

1A. TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION: (circle one)
Construct Extend/Add Alter/Renovate Repair
(Wreck/Raze) Move Install Revocable Revision

Circle One: A/C Slab Room Addition
Porch Deck Fireplace Shed Solar Woodburning Stove
Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) Other

1B. CONSTRUCTION COSTS ESTIMATE $ NA (DEMOLITION)
1C. IF THIS IS A REVISION OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIVE PERMIT SEE PERMIT # NA
1D. INDICATE NAME OF ELECTRIC UTILITY COMPANY PEPCO
1E. IS THIS PROPERTY A HISTORICAL SITE? YES

PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS NA

2A. TYPE OF SEWAGE DISPOSAL
01 ( ) WSSC 02 ( ) Septic
03 ( ) Other

2B. TYPE OF WATER SUPPLY
01 ( ) WSSC 02 ( ) Well
03 ( ) Other

PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL NA

4A. HEIGHT ____ feet ____ inches
4B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:
1. On party line/Property line
2. Entirely on land of owner
3. On public right of way/easement (Revocable Letter Required).

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the ~~construction~~ demolition will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Deborah Susan Ringland — October 24, 1994
Signature of owner or authorized agent (agent must have signature notarized on back) — Date

APPROVED ____ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

DISAPPROVED ✓ Signature [signature] Date 9/13/95

APPLICATION/PERMIT NO: 941103006 J
DATE FILED:
DATE ISSUED:
OWNERSHIP CODE:

FILING FEE: $
PERMIT FEE: $
BALANCE $
RECEIPT NO: FEE WAIVED:

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION

OESCRIPTION OF PROPOSEO WORK: (including composition, color and texture of materials to be used:)

DEMOLITION OF BUILDING

(If more space is needed, attach additional sheets on plain or lined paper to this application)

ATTACH TO THIS APPLICATION (2) COPIES OF: SUCH SITE PLANS (lot dimensions, building location with dimensions, drives, walks, fences, patios, etc. proposed or existing) and/or ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS (floor plans, elevations, etc.), PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE AREA AFFECTED, as are necessary to fully describe the proposed work.

MAIL OR DELIVER THE APPLICATION ANO ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS TO THE:
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
51 MONROE STREET. SUITE 1001
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Montgomery County Government

Historic Preservation Commission

51 Monroe Street, Suite 1001, Rockville, Maryland 20850
217-3625

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CONTRACTOR NA TELEPHONE NO. NA
CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION NUMBER

PLANS PREPARED BY NA TELEPHONE NO. NA
(Include Area Code)
REGISTRATION NUMBER NA

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE

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Town/City SOMERSET, CHEVY CHASE Election District 7 / SUB. 44

Nearest Cross Street SURREY STREET

Lot 4 Block 5 Subdivision SOMERSET HEIGHTS

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Circle One: A/C Slab Room Addition
Porch Deck Fireplace Shed Solar Woodburning Stove
Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) Other

1B. CONSTRUCTION COSTS ESTIMATE $ NA (DEMOLITION)
1C. IF THIS IS A REVISION OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIVE PERMIT SEE PERMIT # NA
1D. INDICATE NAME OF ELECTRIC UTILITY COMPANY PEPCO
1E. IS THIS PROPERTY A HISTORICAL SITE? YES

PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS NA

2A. TYPE OF SEWAGE DISPOSAL
01 ( ) WSSC 02 ( ) Septic
03 ( ) Other

2B. TYPE OF WATER SUPPLY
01 ( ) WSSC 02 ( ) Well
03 ( ) Other

PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL NA

4A. HEIGHT ____ feet ____ inches
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Deborah Susan Ringland — October 24, 1994
Signature of owner or authorized agent (agent must have signature notarized on back) — Date

APPROVED ____ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission
DISAPPROVED ✓ Signature [signature] Date 9/13/95

APPLICATION/PERMIT NO: 941103006 J
DATE FILED:
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OWNERSHIP CODE:
FILING FEE: $
PERMIT FEE: $
BALANCE $
RECEIPT NO: FEE WAIVED:

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETED AND THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK: (including composition, color and texture of materials to be used:)

DEMOLITION OF BUILDING

(If more space is needed, attach additional sheets on plain or lined paper to this application)

ATTACH TO THIS APPLICATION (2) COPIES OF: SUCH SITE PLANS (lot dimensions, building location with dimensions, drives, walks, fences, patios, etc. proposed or existing) and/or ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS (floor plans, elevations, etc.), PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE AREA AFFECTED, as are necessary to fully describe the proposed work.

MAIL OR DELIVER THE APPLICATION AND ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS TO THE:
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
51 MONROE STREET, SUITE 1001
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

1. WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

a. Description of existing structure(s) and environmental setting, including their historical features and significance:

BURNED HOUSE (SEE PROFESSIONAL OPINION LETTERS AS PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED ; COPIES ATTACHED)

b. General description of project and its impact on the historic resource(s), the environmental setting, and, where applicable, the historic district:

DEMOLITION OF HOUSE AND GARAGE

2. Statement of Project Intent:

Short, written statement that describes:

a. the proposed design of the new work, in terms of scale, massing, materials, details, and landscaping:

DEMOLITION OF HOUSE AND GARAGE

b. the relationship of this design to the existing resource(s):

NA

c. the way in which the proposed work conforms to the specific requirements of the Ordinance (Chapter 24A):

NA

3. Project Plan:

Site and environmental setting, drawn to scale (staff will advise on area required). Plan to include:

a. the scale, north arrow, and date;

b. dimensions and heights of all existing and proposed structures;

c. brief description and age of all structures (e.g., 2 story, frame house c.1900);

d. grading at no less than 5′ contours (contour maps can be obtained from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring; telephone 495-4610); and

e. site features such as walks, drives, fences, ponds, streams, trash dumpsters, mechanical equipment, and landscaping.

4. Tree Survey: If applicable, tree survey indicating location, caliper and species of all trees within project area which are 6" in caliper or larger (including those to be removed).

5. Design Features: Schematic construction plans drawn to scale at 1/8" =1'-0", or 1/4" = 1'-0", indicating location, size and general type of walls, window and door openings, roof profiles, and other fixed features of both the existing resource(s) and the proposed work.

6. Facades: Elevation drawings, drawn to scale at 1/8" = 1'0", or 1/4" = 1'0", clearly indicating proposed work in relation to existing construction and, when appropriate, context. All materials and fixtures proposed for exterior must be noted on the elevations drawings. An existing and a proposed elevation drawing of each facade affected by the proposed work is required.

7. Materials Specifications: General description of materials and manufactured items proposed for incorporation in the work of the project.

8. Photos of Resources: Clearly labeled color photographic prints of each facade of existing resource, including details of the affected portions. All labels should be placed on the front of photographs.

9. Photos of Context: Clearly labeled color photographic prints of the resource as viewed from the public right-of-way and from adjoining properties, and of the adjoining and facing properties.

Color renderings and models are encouraged, but not generally required.

Applicant shall submit 2 copies of all materials in a format no larger than 8 1/2" x 14"; black and white photocopies of color photos are acceptable with the submission of one original photo.

10. Addresses of Adjacent Property Owners. For all projects, provide an accurate list of adjacent and confronting property owners (not tenants), including names, addresses, and zip codes. This list should include the owners of all lots or parcels which adjoin the parcel in question, as well as the owner(s) of lot(s) or parcel(s) which lie directly across the street/highway from the parcel in question. If you need assistance obtaining this information, call the Department of Assessments and Taxation, at 279-1355.

1. Name WALETZKY, DR. LUCY R.
   Address 4728 DORSET AVENUE - SOMERSET
   City/Zip CHEVY CHASE, MD. 20815

2. Name COLSON, M./M. EARL, M.
   Address 4725 DORSET AVENUE - SOMERSET
   City/Zip CHEVY CHASE, MD. 20815

3. Name BROWN, M./M. JONATHAN C.
Address 4721 DORSET AVENUE - SOMERSET
City/Zip CHEVY CHASE, MD. 20815

4. Name HARMAN, M./M. GEORGE
Address 4719 DORSET AVENUE - SOMERSET
City/Zip CHEVY CHASE, MD. 20815

5. Name NIK, DR. NARIEMAN
Address 4718 DORSET AVENUE - SOMERSET
City/Zip CHEVY CHASE, MD. 20815

6. Name OREIELD, MRS. MATTHIAS N.
Address 4715 ESSEX AVENUE - SOMERSET
City/Zip CHEVY CHASE, MD. 20815

7. Name RINGLAND, M./M. MICHAEL G.G. (OWNED BY. P. RINGLAND SEE #8. below)
Address 4721 ESSEX AVENUE - SOMERSET
City/Zip CHEVY CHASE, MD. 20815

8. Name RINGLAND, M./M. PETER
Address 4727 ESSEX AVENUE - SOMERSET
City/Zip CHEVY CHASE, MD. 20815

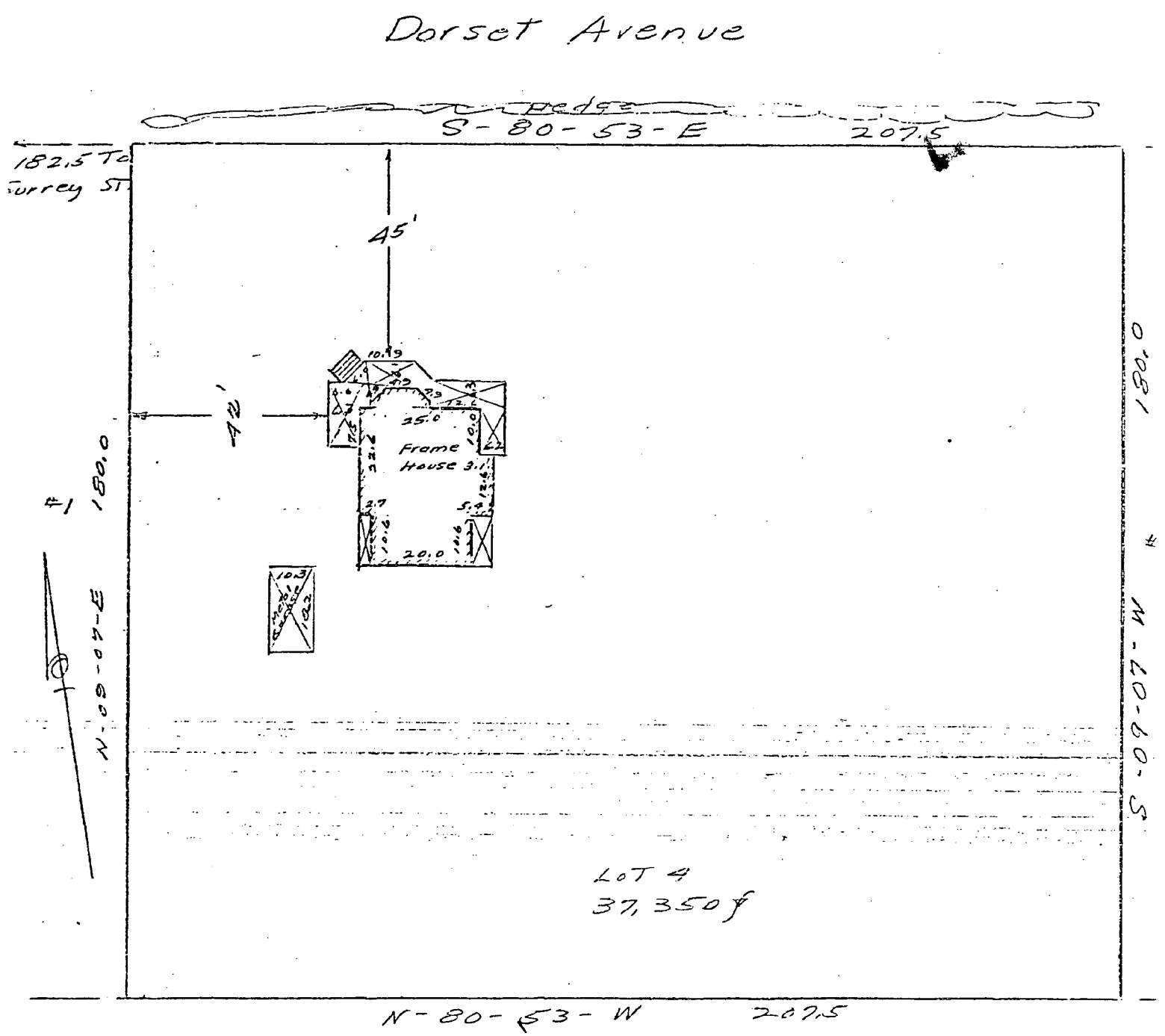
1757E

TOPOGRAPHIC ENGINEERS

Surveyor & Topographer

BETHESDA, MARYLAND

House Location Plat
4722 Dorset Avenue
Lot 4 Block 5
Somerset Heights,
Montgomery Co., Md.
Plat Book 1 at 30
Scale: 1" = 30'
September 17, 1959



13

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE CAREFULLY SURVEYED THE ABOVE PROPERTY BY TRANSIT-TAPE SURVEY, LOCATED IMPROVEMENTS THEREON, AND HAVE FOUND IT TO BE AS SHOWN ON THIS PLAT AND THAT THERE ARE NO ENCROACHMENTS EITHER WAY ACROSS PROPERTY LINES EXCEPT AS SHOWN ON SAID PLAT.

MD. REG. NO. 1090 — VA. REG. NO. 441 FRANK E. LANE, REGISTERED SURVEYOR

Frank E. Lane

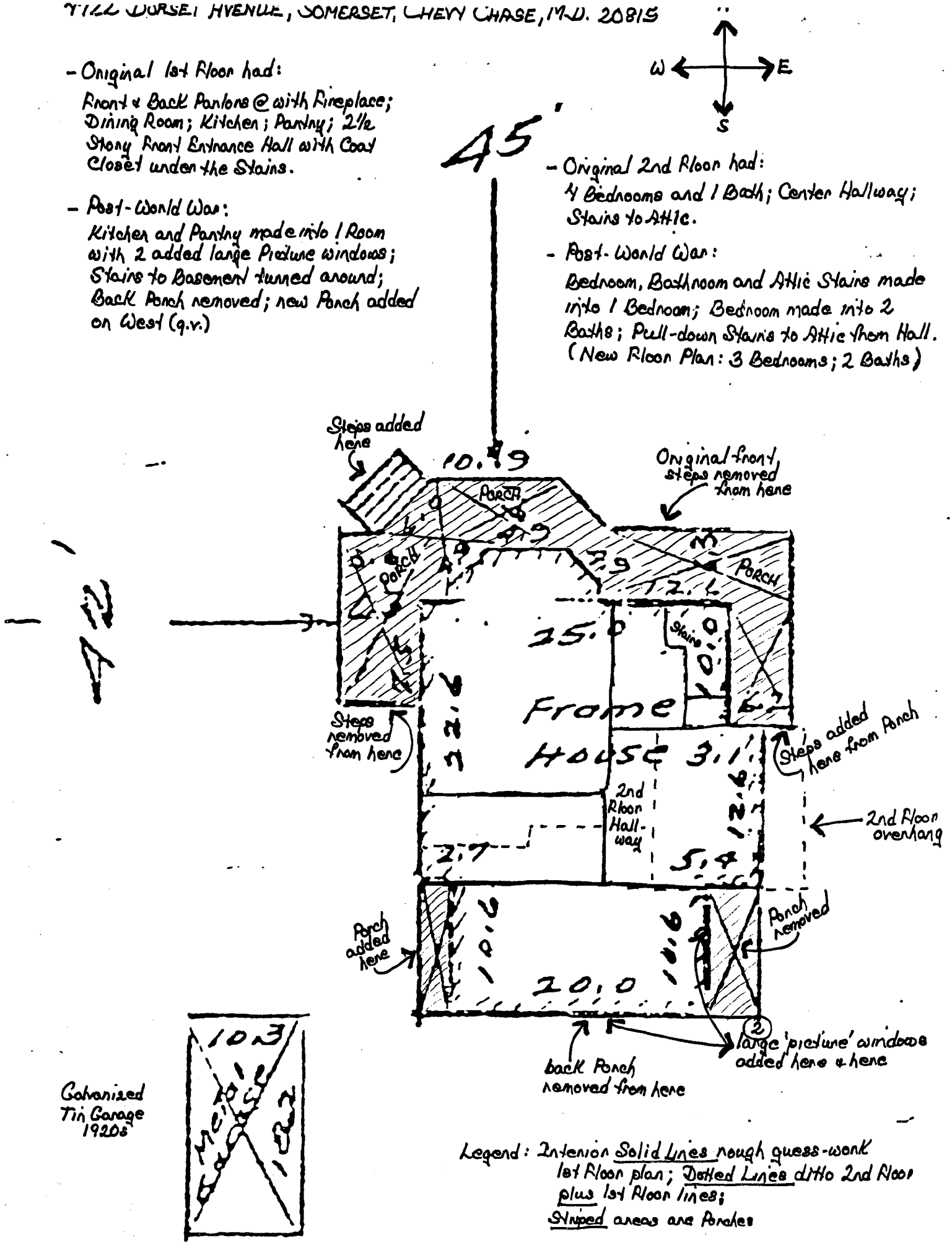
7122 DORSET AVENUE, SOMERSET, CHEVY CHASE, MD. 20815

- Original 1st Floor had:
  Front & Back Parlors @ with Fireplace; Dining Room; Kitchen; Pantry; 2½ Story Front Entrance Hall with Coat Closet under the Stairs.

- Post-World War:
  Kitchen and Pantry made into 1 Room with 2 added large Picture windows; Stairs to Basement turned around; Back Porch removed; new Porch added on West (q.v.)

- Original 2nd Floor had:
  4 Bedrooms and 1 Bath; Center Hallway; Stairs to Attic.

- Post-World War:
  Bedroom, Bathroom and Attic Stairs made into 1 Bedroom; Bedroom made into 2 Baths; Pull-down Stairs to Attic from Hall. (New Floor Plan: 3 Bedrooms; 2 Baths)



ANDREW H. DIEM, ARCHITECT, 5230 LOUGHBORO RD., N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20016 202-364-8115

October 14, 1994

Ms. Deborah Susan Ringland
6801 West Avenue
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Re: 4722 Dorset Avenue, Somerset, Chevy Chase, Maryland

Dear Ms. Ringland:

Based on your request for a site review to explore the feasibility to restore the structure located at 4722 Dorset Avenue in Somerset, Maryland the following observations are noted.

The structure is a very simple wood frame, single family residence constructed in the last decade of the nineteenth century in the Carpenter Victorian style. The building is located on one side of a parcel of land approximately 37,350 square feet in size. The building does not represent the work of any master and the structure definitely does not exhibit any high artistic values.

The house was designed as a modified four square plan with a rear appendage. The stair serving the second floor is in the entry hall, with the adjacent large parlor on the front and the small parlor behind on the side of the house. The dining room is behind the entry hall adjacent to the small side parlor. The kitchen was located behind the dining room and the small parlor. Upstairs there is a central hall with one bedroom over the front parlor, one bedroom over the dining room and another bedroom was located over the kitchen with two baths over the small parlor.

In the late 1930's, the house underwent significant interior alterations resulting in a "modernization" through the removal of extensive amounts of the original Victorian embellishments. The fireplace mantels and over mantels were replaced and a large plate glass mirror installed above the front parlor fireplace , the newel posts and related entry hall items were drastically modified in the attempt to bring the house in line with the then fashionable stream lined Art Deco style.

You informed me that after the Second World War, substantial remodeling was done to the interior of the house. On the first floor across the rear, the original kitchen and pantry were combined into a family room, a window, exterior door and the original back porch were removed, and two large, out of character, modern plate glass "picture windows" were installed, substantially altering the rear exterior fenestration of the building. A new smaller porch was created on the side accessible through a door created from the former pantry window. The stairs to the partial basement from the original pantry were repositioned. The original screened porch adjacent to the dining room was removed.

You also informed me that the renovations at that time to the second floor of the house, above the family room, involved reconfiguring two rear bedrooms and the attic stairs into one large bedroom and a "pull down" type attic stair in the hallway. The small bedroom above the small parlor was converted into two bathrooms designed in the style prevalent at the time. The original four bedroom, one bath residence was then a three bedroom two bath structure.

ANDREW H. DIEM, ARCHITECT, 5230 LOUGHBORO RD., N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20016 202-364-8115

Deborah Susan Ringland
October 14, 1994

In December 1978 the building suffered vast architectural and structural ravage from a kitchen fire and the related smoke, water and firemen's damage. The widespread majority of the damage to the building was as a result of the fire and the fireman's force, including the tremendous amount of water used to squelch the extensive fire. The fire originated in the kitchen area then spread to the bedroom above consuming the rear of the house. The fire then engulfed the attic spaces and the bedroom above the dining room. Holes were cut in the roof to vent the structure and an immense quantity of water was dumped on the house in an effort to cease the fire. The extensive damage that was not done by fire and smoke most certainly was done by the water used to quench the fire.

It is understood that after the fire, your parents gave the property and what was left of the family home to you in July 1979. It is also understood that there was no fire insurance settlement nor payment made to either your parents nor you after the fire. Efforts were undertaken by you to make the building secure from the weather and vandals. It was impossible to secure the roof above the rear of the building since the structural roof rafter members disintegrated in the fire and there was nothing to support any weatherproof protection. Any work on that area of the building was extremely dangerous since the fire had made that portion unsafe. The efforts to protect other areas were ineffective due to the extensive fire and related damage and the labor of vandals who removed much of the remaining period details. Relating to your request to now secure the house from the elements of the weather, I find that it is totally impractical, given the frailty of the existing structure, and any efforts to that end would be a complete waste of money.

The residence today is in such a state that it would be impractical to attempt to reconstruct the structure and return the building to the original Victorian style. To try to do so would be beyond reality. The total rear of the building was burnt beyond any practical effort to save. The deterioration of the remaining interior resulted from the firemen's efforts to stop the fire, causing such extensive damage that it would most certainly be necessary to dismantle the structure down to the foundation, label the various members, replace all of the deteriorated structural elements and then reconstruct the building with the very few salvageable original architectural members and new extensive custom made elements to match the deteriorated or missing pieces. Given the extent of this scope of work, the entire reconstructed structure would have to be brought into line with the current building and life safety codes. The very stone foundation the building rests upon many have to be totally rebuilt due to the damage the mortar suffered as a result of the heat from the fire and the water used to extinguish the inferno.

The most practical approach would be the demolition of the existing structure due to the health hazards and extremely unsafe conditions. Attempting to renovate the residence in the current severe condition of deterioration would cause undue financial hardship and deprive you of a reasonable use of the property. Considering the interests of the public in preserving the character of the neighborhood, the general welfare is better served by permitting the demolition of the existing structure and the construction of one or more replacement houses. These residences should be designed in keeping with the architectural character of Somerset.

Very truly yours,

Andrew H. Diem
Registered Architect
#94462

GMR LTD.
ARCHITECTS PLANNERS ENGINEERS

ELLIOTT GITLIN, R.A.
SILVIA Y. MACGYRAE, A.I.A.
HOWARD J. ROSENBERG, P.E.

October 10, 1994

Ms. Deborah Susan Ringland
6801 West Avenue
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

RE: 4722 Dorset Avenue, Somerset
Chevy Chase, Maryland
GMR, Ltd. Comm. No.: 94099

Dear Ms. Ringland:

Pursuant to your request, I visited the above referenced residence on September 24, 1994 and met with Mr. Andrew Diem, Architect, and you. The purpose of my visit was to familiarize myself with the property and observe the current condition of the building. The following is my report.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The building is a two story Victorian style structure with a partial basement and there is also a small attic. I was told that the building was built during the latter part of the 19th century and has undergone several alterations since then. In December, 1979 a severe fire occurred and the majority of the house toward the rear was destroyed.

The structure is wood frame with ordinary full-thick wood joists mostly 2 x 10's and 2 x 12's and full-thick wood 2 x 4 studs on the interior and exterior. The walls and ceilings typically are plaster on wood lath. Flooring consists of diagonal sheathing. On the day of my visit, the remaining windows and entry doors were covered with plywood or plastic sheeting to keep out the weather and/or vandals. The house has been unoccupied since the fire.

I toured the interior of the house as well as the exterior. Over 50% of the house's structure has been razed and is now missing due to the fire. The balance of the remaining structural elements have been affected either by the fire, water applied by firefighters putting out the fire, termites or wood rot. There is very little left of the structure I consider salvageable for re-use.

7019 MacARTHUR BOULEVARD P.O. BOX 8 CABIN JOHN, MARYLAND 20818 • 301-229-8300 FAX: 301-229-8305 BALTIMORE: 410-782-2454

October 10, 1994
RE: **4722 Dorset Avenue, Somerset**
Chevy Chase, Maryland
GMR, Ltd. Comm. No.: 94099
Page Two

RECOMMENDATIONS

Inasmuch as there is so little structural elements left which I consider reusable, it is my opinion that the most reasonable course of action to take is to completely demolish the existing structure There is just too much devastation from the effects of the fire and in my judgement it would be economically unfeasible to attempt to restore this building.

Very truly yours,

Howard J. Rosenberg, P.E.
Executive Vice President
GMR, Ltd.

HJR/tlw

4722 DORSET AVENUE - PHOTOS

(MORE PHOTOS AVAILABLE)

LIVING ROOM INTERIOR

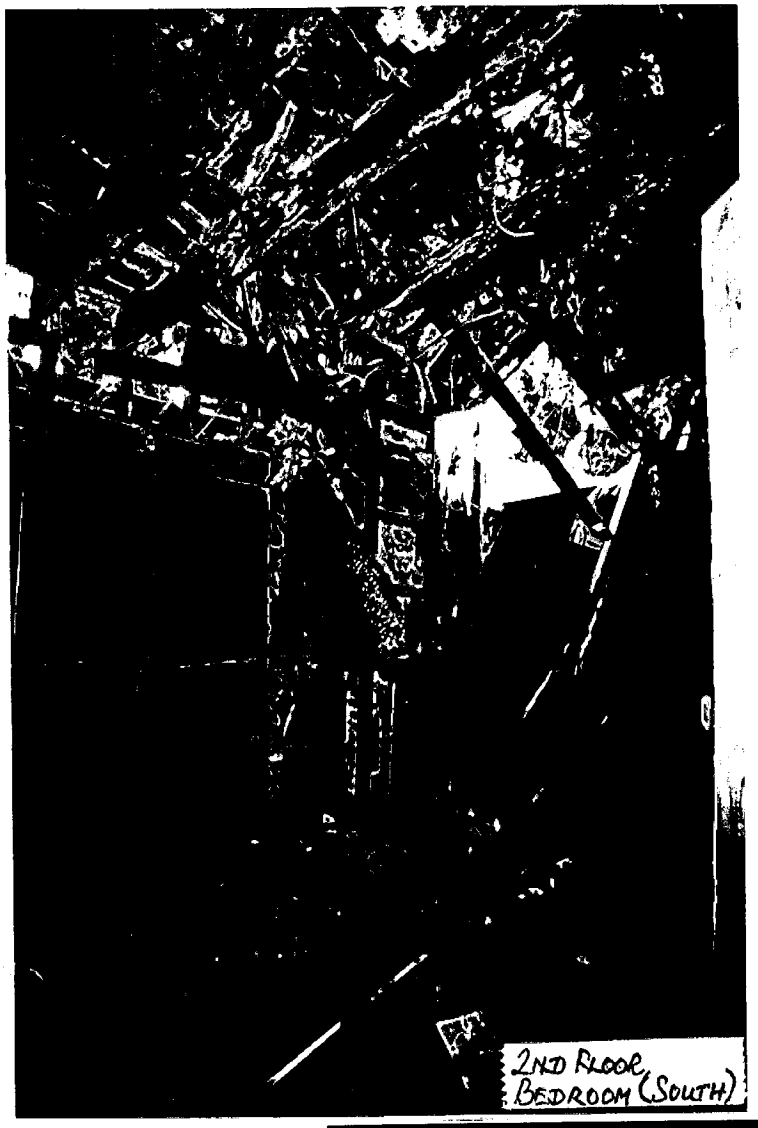
LIVING ROOM INTERIOR

DINING ROOM INTERIOR

DINING ROOM INTERIOR

DINING ROOM INTERIOR

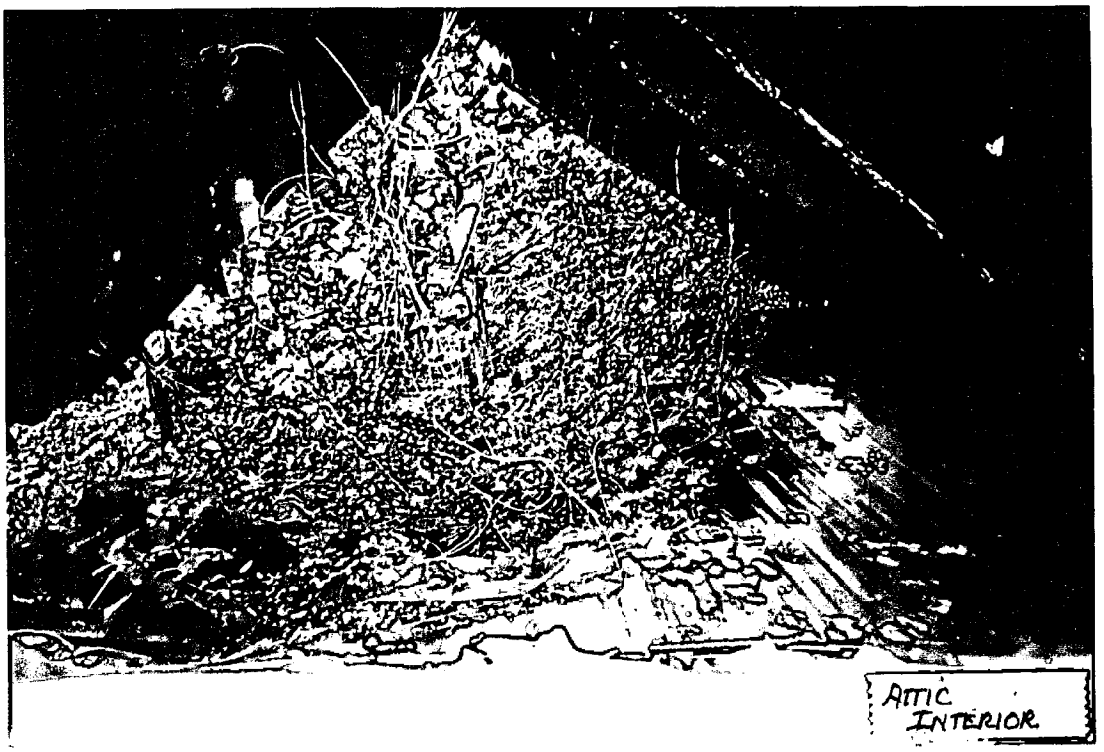
DINING ROOM INTERIOR



2ND FLOOR
BEDROOM (SOUTH)

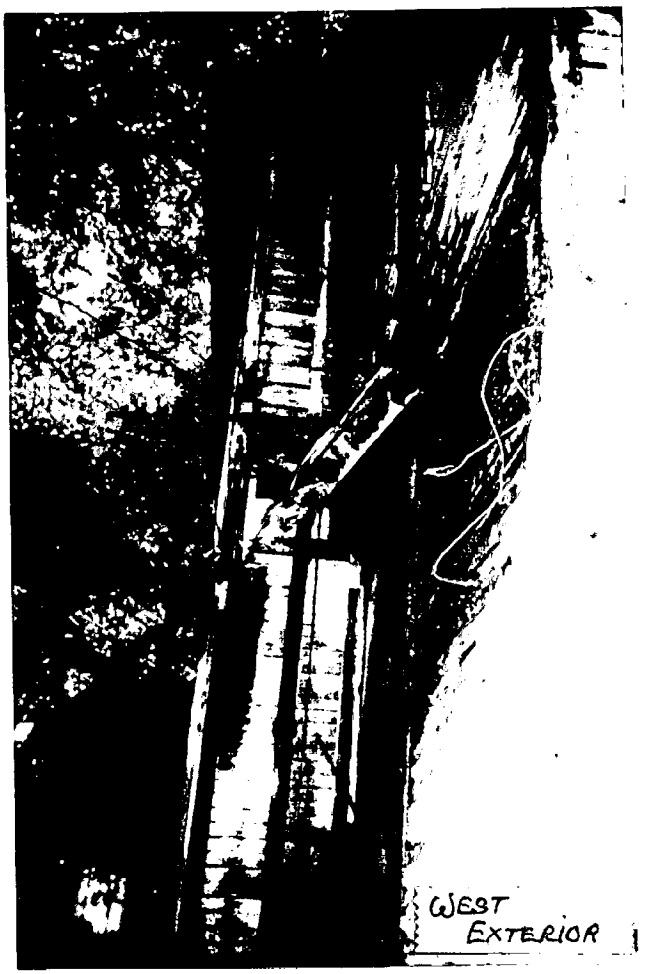
2ND FLR
BEDROOM (EAST)

ATTIC INTERIOR

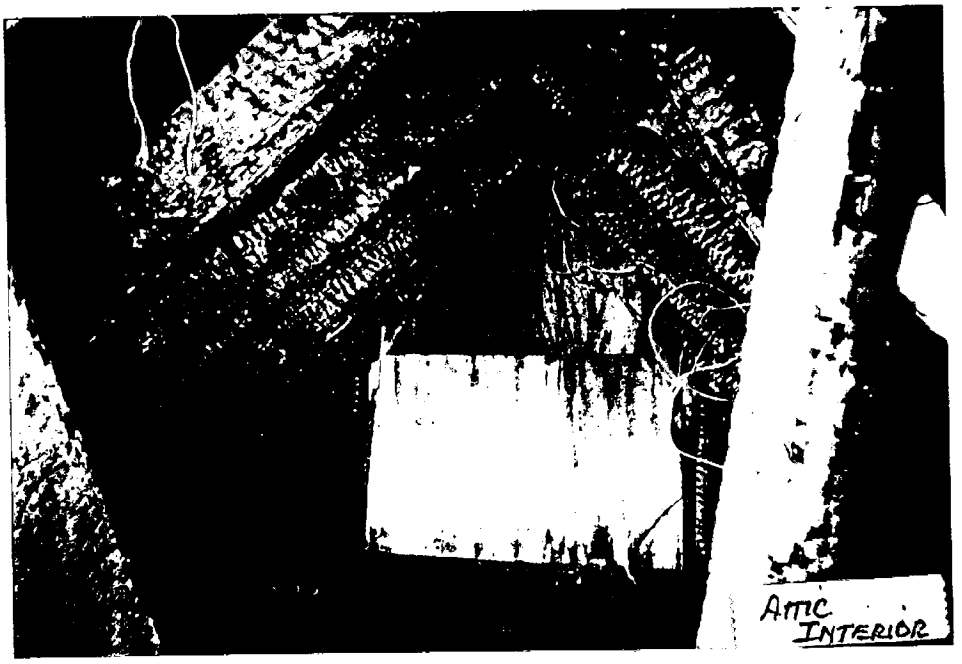


ATTIC INTERIOR

KITCHEN INTERIOR



WEST EXTERIOR



ATTIC INTERIOR

RINGLAND HOUSE INFO

NOTES & COMMENTS: The house at 4722 Dorset has been associated with a pair of men in its history who have left their mark on public life through their high-minded, public-spirited endeavors, Harvey W. Wiley and Arthur C. Ringland. In light of the special importance of the house in the history of Somerset, it is unfortunate that the house was the victim of a fire which marred the rear of the house in December of 1978. The Ringlands, then-owners of the house, were uninsured and had to abandon the house. The house still lies un-occupied and is currently (December 1994) the subject of permit for its demolition by Arthur Ringland's daughter Susan, inheritor of the house.

4722 Dorset was one of the original five houses in Somerset and was built by Harvey Wiley around 1891. Wiley was one of the original five men of the Department of Agriculture who co-founded the town of Somerset.

Harvey Wiley was Chief of the Bureau of Chemistry of the Department of Agriculture at the time of his purchase of the land which would become "Somerset Heights". Wiley was known as the "Father of the Pure Food and Drug Act". On the 50th Anniversary of the passage of the act, Dr. Wiley was honored by having his visage placed on a commemorative stamp.

Wiley left a professorship at Purdue to accept an offer to head the Bureau of Chemistry at the Department of Agriculture in 1883. Wiley brought with him from Purdue a former student of his, Charles A. Crampton. Crampton would later join with Wiley in the development of Somerset Heights and would serve as the first mayor of the town of Somerset from 1906 to 1910.

In his first decade of service at USDA, Wiley concentrated on developing improved refining methods for sugar cane, as well as on the development of methods for efficiently extracting sugar from sorghum. Although the development of an economically viable sorghum sugar process remained elusive, experiments under Wiley's direction succeeded in refining the methods used for sugar production. But Wiley's attention soon turned for good to the issue of pure food.

In 1884, Wiley and his office published the first of many reports on the state of adulteration of many types of food products. Various ground pepper samples, for example, were found to be adulterated with husks, dirt, rice, mustard hulls, cracker crumbs, corn, cayenne or charcoal. Wiley worked hard to gain the passage of a general Pure Food and Drug Act. Various measures died in committee in 1886, 1888 and 1891. In March of 1892, such a bill passed the House of Representatives, but was defeated in the Senate owing to the strong opposition of food manufacturers and grocery interests. Wiley continued to fight for a Pure Food and Drug Act, and won some piecemeal victories in Congress even as the overarching goal of a comprehensive Food and Drug act eluded him.

Wiley was a scientific man who relied on the principles of common sense and honesty. Harmful adulterants to foods had to be stamped out, and labels of foods had to be brought up to the standards of simple honesty. If "honey" was in reality mostly corn syrup, it had to be labeled as such. Wiley attracted none of the sensationalist coverage which dominated his time, but his patient research had laid the indisputable groundwork for passage of the

Act in 1906.

As the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 made its way through congress, Wiley worked vigorously behind the scenes, supplying information to Senators and Representatives who supported the measure and accepting a number of speaking engagements in and around the capital. On June 30, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the bill into law. The bill helped to restore public confidence in the manufacturers of foods and medicines. The labelling requirements, as well as the increased public conscience on the issue helped drive a large proportion of adulterated foods and patent medicines out of the market.

In recognition of Wiley's accomplishments, Rep. James R. Mann of Illinois, just before the vote on the compromise Food and Drug bill is put to a vote said: "Mr. Speaker, I do not desire to close without saying a word in regard to Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, Chief of the Bureau of Chemistry. While in some important respects I have been unable to fully agree with Doctor Wiley's opinions, yet he and I have formed a close friendship in connection with the consideration of pure-food legislation, and I have constantly sought his advice as well as his knowledge of facts. We owe much to him."

Wiley built the house in hopes of luring his parents from Indiana to live with him. Wiley's parents, however, never moved to the house. Wiley instead rented the property for a number of years before selling it in 1904 to Perry and Mabel Michener. The Micheners in turn sold the property to the Ringlands in 1938. The Ringlands re-decorated the interior of the house but left the

exterior largely unaltered.

Arthur Cuming Ringland (1882-1981) was a distinguished long time resident of Somerset, active in Conservation and Humanitarian Programs throughout his long career. Mr. Ringland joined the U.S. Forest Service in 1900 and worked as the first regional forester for the Southwest. After serving in World War One, Mr. Ringland worked under future President Hoover for the American Relief Administration, heading the mission to Czechoslovakia. During World War II, Mr. Ringland again turned to humanitarian concerns, becoming executive director of the President's War Relief Control Board. In 1945, he helped originate the concept of the private voluntary organization that became CARE. A principal focus of his work was persuading the government to transport food packages to the needy in Europe. Mr. Ringland became known as "the father of CARE" and was honored by the United Nations for his efforts. After retiring in 1952, Mr. Ringland was active in the Food for Peace Program, the American Freedom from Hunger Foundation and the Citizens Committee on Natural Resources. The Ringland family remained at 4722 Dorset until December of 1978.

In December of 1978, a fire of electrical origin burned the rear kitchen wing of the house and marred the attic, roof and timbers. The front of the house was largely unmarred by the fire, but suffered some cosmetic smoke damage and water damage of undetermined extent. Since gaining co-title to the property in 1979, Susan Ringland has not improved or restored the property, though she has taken some steps to secure it from vandals and the elements. In October of 1994, she applied for a permit to demolish

the house.

H.A.W.P.s APPLIED FOR/RECEIVED:

35/36-91E, June 19, 1991: Demolition of detached garage to rear of house. Garage was damaged in storm of June 1989. Approved, no conditions.

35/36-94D, January 11, 1995 (forthcoming): Demolition of the original circa 1891 house. The house was damaged in the fire of 1978 and has been vacant ever since. The house was unsecured from vandals and the elements for a long time and now is slated to be sold. Susan Ringland wishes to clear the lot for sale and possible construction of two houses on the site.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Address: 4722 Dorset Avenue	Meeting Date: 2/8/95
Resource: Somerset Historic District	Review: HAWP/**DEMOLITION**
Case Number: 35/36-94D	Tax Credit: No
Public Notice: 1/25/95	Report Date: 12/28/94
Applicant: Deborah Susan Ringland	Staff: David Berg
PROPOSAL: Demolish ca. 1890 residence	RECOMMEND: **DENIAL**

BACKGROUND

The house at 4722 Dorset Avenue is one of the most important properties in the Somerset Historic District both for its architectural and historical significance. Built by Harvey Wiley around 1891, the house was probably the first of the original five houses built in Somerset (only three of the five remain standing today). The house is a Victorian era structure having elements of the Queen Anne style. It is a 2 1/2 story frame house with a central hipped roof. It has a mitered bay with a conical roof and wrap around porch on the North Elevation. The house is sided with beaded board siding and has fishscale shingles on the gable ends.

Dr. Wiley was one of five men from the Department of Agriculture who co-founded the town of Somerset in 1890 through their purchase of 50 acres of land. Harvey Wiley was Chief of the Bureau of Chemistry at the Department of Agriculture and was known as the "Father of the Pure Food and Drug Act". Because of the significant role that he played in this effort, Dr. Wiley has been honored by having his visage placed on a commemorative stamp. Wiley built the house in hopes of luring his parents from Indiana to live with him. Unsuccessful, he instead sold the house in 1904 to Perry and Mabel Michener. The Micheners in turn sold the property to the Ringlands in 1938.

Arthur Cuming Ringland (1882-1981) was a distinguished long time resident of Somerset. In 1945, he helped originate the concept of the private volunteer organization that became CARE. Mr. Ringland became known as "the father of CARE" and was honored by the United Nations for his efforts.

The Ringland family remained at 4722 Dorset until December of 1978, when a kitchen fire damaged the rear of the house, causing the family to move. From the time of the fire until the present, the property has been vacant.

CHRONOLOGY

In December of 1978, a kitchen fire damaged the rear of the house at 4722 Dorset Avenue.

In January of 1989, the Division of Code Enforcement of the Department of Housing and Community Development issued a Condemnation Notice on the property.

Code Enforcement reinspected and cited the property for violations under Chapter 26 of the Montgomery County Code on June 28, 1990 and again on March 8, 1991. These notices also advised the owner, Ms. Ringland, of violations for "Demolition by Neglect" under Chapter 24A.

In 1991, the applicant boarded up the majority of the window and door openings of the structure and removed many of the vines from the lot. She has attempted to keep the building boarded up, but no other significant maintenance work has been done.

On February 8, 1994, Code Enforcement sent Ms. Ringland another letter specifically citing her for violations of Chapter 24A (Demolition by Neglect), and Chapter 26 of the Montgomery County Code. This notice required the applicant to correct these violations by May 1, 1994. No additional maintenance work has been done in response to this citation.

On November 11, 1994 Staff received an application for a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) from Ms. Ringland to totally demolish her house. The submission included a letter from one architect and one structural engineer (attached).

On Thursday, November 17, and Saturday, November 19, 1994, HPC staff and Commissioners had the opportunity to visit the site. With the assistance of Ms. Ringland's representatives, the structure was examined from attic to basement.

STAFF DISCUSSION

It is important to note that the bases on which the applicant has requested a HAWP for demolition related specifically to the integrity and condition of 4722 Dorset Avenue. The HAWP application does <u>not</u> make a direct claim of economic hardship.

If the issue of economic hardship is to be raised, the applicant would need to submit additional information on the value of the entire property at the time of acquisition, the financial investment made in the entire property since acquisition, the current appraised value of the entire property, the ability to sell the property including asking price and offers received, etc. As noted in previous demolition cases which the HPC has reviewed, determinations of economic hardship must be related to the owner's investment-backed expectations and a reasonable return on their investment.

The current financial situation of the owner (i.e. how much money they have at the moment) is a less important consideration in determination of economic hardship. Trying to make these types of decisions based on an individual's current financial situation would lead to unequal protection under the law - wealthy citizens would be treated one way and less wealthy citizens would be treated differently. This approach has been rejected by the HPC.

For these reasons, staff will focus its discussion on the issues that have been directly raised in the HAWP application and will not address economic hardship (as it was not claimed in the HAWP application). Staff will address each of the applicant's arguments for demolition separately:

1) **Architectural significance of the structure:**

Ms. Ringland's architect has argued that the structure is not architecturally significant since it is a "very simple wood frame" house "and does not represent the work of any master and definitely does not exhibit any high artistic values" - essentially citing criteria 2b and c of Chapter 24A-3(b).

Arguments regarding the significance of the house at 4722 Dorset are unjustified at this point. The property was evaluated as part of the designation of the Somerset Historic District that took place in 1990. At that time, the Montgomery County Council not only approved its inclusion in the designated district, but also approved its designation on a map of the district as an "important contributing resource built before 1915". The designation amendment notes that "Houses which were built in Somerset during its primary period of architectural importance (1890 to 1915) represent a wide variety of Victorian styles: Carpenter Gothic, Queen Anne, and Italianate . . . As a group, the early houses in Somerset represent one of the best concentrated collections of Victorian residential architecture in the County."

In essence, the determination has already been made that 4722 Dorset Avenue is architecturally and historically significant, and that it should be protected under the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Although additional justification is not necessary, staff would note that 4722 Dorset is both historically and architecturally significant under several of the criteria, specifically, the house:

1c Is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society;

1d Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the county and its communities;

2a Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;

2d Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;

Staff feels that any argument that the house is not architecturally or historically significant under the criteria set forth in Chapter 24A is without merit since the historic building satisfies several of the criteria.

The architect also mentioned alterations that have taken place on the interior of the structure. Interior alterations, however, are performed on many Master Plan structures since the HPC only regulates the exteriors of those structures. **These interior alterations do not diminish the status as a Master Plan Site.** The exterior features of 4722 Dorset retain a high degree of architectural integrity and exhibit few alterations - this is a very intact historic house.

2) **Extent of fire damage:**

The most important issue before the HPC is whether or not the structure has been damaged by the fire extensively enough to be considered beyond restoration. The structural engineer hired by Ms. Ringland reported that "over 50% of the house's structure" had been destroyed be the fire and that very little of the structure was salvageable for reuse. In addition, the architect's report stated that the stone foundation may have to be completely rebuilt due to the heat and water damage created by the effort to extinguish the 1978 fire.

Staff has carefully examined the damage to the building resulting from the fire and has concluded the following:

A. Fire damage to the rear of the structure, specifically the first floor rear kitchen and second floor rear bedroom (the area shown in the application to be about 22.0' x 10.6') is extensive enough that **this part of the structure is, in staff's opinion, beyond salvage and should be demolished.**

B. The cantilevered bay on the east side of the house, towards the rear, has also been severely damaged by fire. Additional damage has occurred because the windows of the room are not boarded and rain/snow has entered the building over the years. Staff feels that the condition of this small section of the house is marginal. **It may be appropriate to remove this cantilevered bay; however, this decision is not as clear-cut as the rear section described above.**

C. **The remainder of the house, although blackened by smoke and in disrepair, is not, in staff's opinion beyond a reasonable expectation of restoration.** Staff observation is that at least 75% of the exterior fabric of the structure is intact. The great majority of the framing

members are sound and the majority of the roof rafters, although some are blackened, remain structurally sound.

D. **The majority of the stone foundation is intact, not showing any indication of sagging or bowing and still retains most of its mortar.** There is some heavy mortar damage to the sides of the house nearer to the rear of the structure, but this damage is not beyond repair and repointing. This mortar erosion is probably a result of the water used to fight the fire. Inspection of the basement indicated that the damage had not infiltrated the foundation to the point of structural failure and can be remedied.

Staff feels that, except for the areas noted above, the majority of structure is completely salvageable. In fact, the building is in remarkably good structural condition, given that a major fire occurred, it has been vacant for over 15 years, and little maintenance work has been to the house done during that period.

3) **Extent of other deterioration:**

Given that the house has not been maintained since at least 1978, it is obviously in need of a great deal of repair and deferred maintenance. It is important to note that the house was in deteriorated condition in 1990 - when it was designated as an important contributing resource in the Somerset Historic District. Its condition has not significantly changed since it was designated.

Although the owner has tried to keep the building boarded up, she has not done any substantive maintenance to the house or the grounds around it. Therefore, it can be concluded that the current condition of the property is mainly due to the inaction of the owner.

Staff is very concerned about rewarding deferred maintenance by permitting a request for demolition. It would serve as a signal to other owners of historic properties that demolition can be accomplished by allowing a structure to fall into disrepair by inaction. In essence, approving this demolition request would be sanctioning demolition-by-neglect.

Most importantly, however, staff has concluded that the house still maintains its essential historic and architectural features and character. In addition, staff feels that the majority of the structure is reasonably restorable.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

In formulating a recommendation, staff has considered a number of factors: 1.) 4722 Dorset Avenue is one of the oldest and most significant houses in the Somerset Historic District - it is an

essential part of the history of the community; 2.) the condition of the majority of the structure is <u>not</u> beyond repair and can be reasonably renovated; 3.) the property was in deteriorated condition when it was designated as part of the Somerset Historic District; 4.) the current condition of the property is the result of the owner's inaction and deferred maintenance.

Given these factors, it is staff's recommendation that the Commission **deny** the applicant's request to totally demolish the dwelling at 4722 Dorset Avenue. Staff's recommendation is consistent with the purposes of Chapter 24A-8(a):

> The Commission shall instruct the director to deny a permit if it finds, based on the evidence and information presented to or before the commission that the alteration for which the permit is sought would be inappropriate or inconsistent with, or detrimental to the preservation, enhancement or ultimate protection of the historic site, or historic resource within an historic district, and to the purposes of this chapter.

and with Standard 2:

> The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

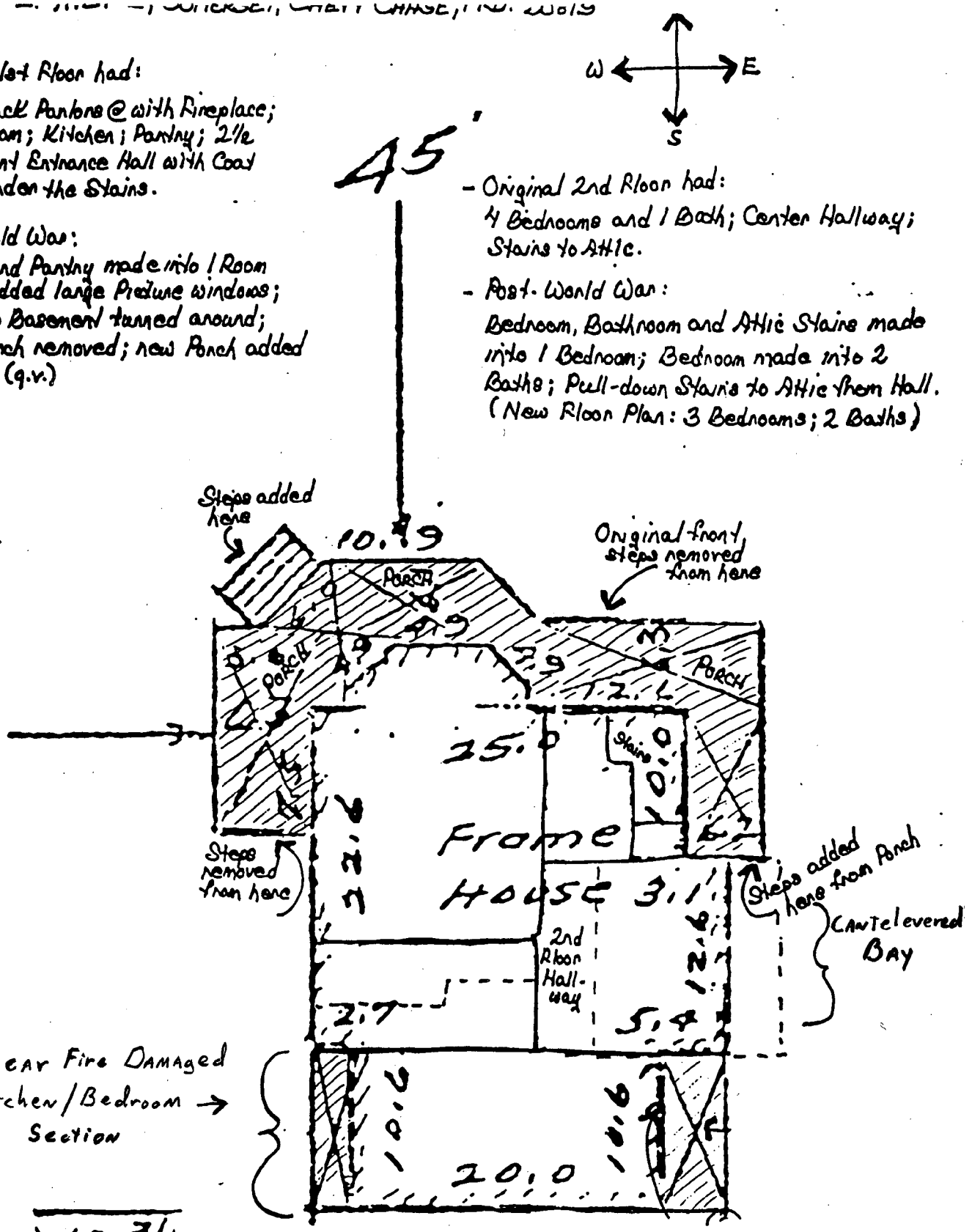
In the event that the applicant comes to the Commission with an application to restore the house and/or build a new addition, staff would recommend that the Commission look favorably upon the demolition of the rear kitchen area of the structure, and <u>possibly</u> the cantilevered bay on the east side of the building, as part of that restoration/addition process.

- Original 1st Floor had:
  Front & Back Parlors @ with Fireplace; Dining Room; Kitchen; Pantry; 2½ Story Front Entrance Hall with Coat Closet under the Stairs.

- Post-World War:
  Kitchen and Pantry made into 1 Room with 2 added large Picture windows; Stairs to Basement turned around; Back Porch removed; new Porch added on West (q.v.)

- Original 2nd Floor had:
  4 Bedrooms and 1 Bath; Center Hallway; Stairs to Attic.

- Post-World War:
  Bedroom, Bathroom and Attic Stairs made into 1 Bedroom; Bedroom made into 2 Baths; Pull-down Stairs to Attic from Hall. (New Floor Plan: 3 Bedrooms; 2 Baths)



Galvanized Tin Garage 1920s

Legend: Interior Solid Lines rough guess-work 1st Floor plan; Dotted Lines ditto 2nd Floor plus 1st Floor lines; Striped areas are Porches

LERCH, EARLY & BREWER
CHARTERED
LAW OFFICES

SUITE 380
3 BETHESDA METRO CENTER
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814-5367

TELEPHONE: (301) 986-1300
FACSIMILE: (301) 986-0332

WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE
1900 M STREET, N.W.
SUITE 600
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
(202) 331-7120

VIRGINIA OFFICE
9302 LEE HIGHWAY
SUITE 1100
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22031
(703) 273-5911

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NUMBER:
(301)

October 17, 1994

Christopher E. Hitchens, Esquire
Assistant County Attorney
101 Monroe Street, 3rd Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: Deborah Susan Ringland

Dear Christopher:

When we spoke recently and agreed to a joint continuance of the District Court matters, I promised to send you a proposed plan of action on behalf of Ms. Ringland as soon as her architect had had an opportunity to assess the property.

The architect, Mr. Andrew Diem, has examined the property in considerable detail. I have just received his report, and enclose a copy for your review and file. He had been asked by Ms. Ringland to advise her: (1) as to the best methods for further protecting the property beyond the substantial measures she had already undertaken in the past, and then (2) as to the feasibility of renovating the house, in whole or in part. Mr. Diem concluded that, in his independent professional judgment, the fire damage was such that the structure is not one which should, or could, be restored.

Mr. Diem brought in an independent structural expert, Mr. Howard Rosenberg, who is a registered professional engineer. Mr. Rosenberg visited the site and his evaluation of the structure concluded that, as a result of the fire related damage, the structural integrity has been substantially destroyed and that the building cannot be reasonably renovated or preserved.

Enclosed with this letter are the reports of both Mr. Diem and Mr. Rosenberg.

Based upon the opinions of two experts in historic structures who advise her that the structure should be demolished, Ms. Ringland has reluctantly concluded to file and pursue an application for a demolition permit.

We respectfully request your active assistance and support in obtaining this permit. In this connection, we believe that a personal tour of the property would be advisable, and invite you and Mr. Tull to a personal tour with our experts, Mr. Diem and Mr. Rosenberg, at your earliest possible convenience. We would also be very happy to have Gwen Marcus and representatives of the HPC tour the property. Since much of the space within the structure is both cramped and dangerous (as well as unlighted), it might be best to do two tours. I will be happy to discuss the logistics with you after you have had an opportunity to review this letter and the enclosures.

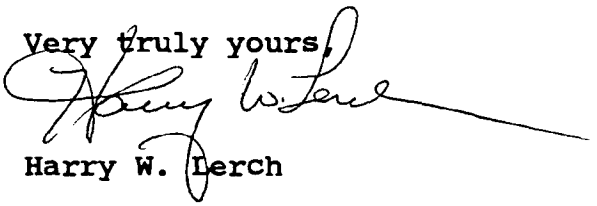
Ms. Ringland proposes that the District Court case be continued to allow her time to sell the property. One prospective purchaser has already shown a strong desire to resubdivide it into just two lots. This person would sell one lot, and build a single family house in a style compatible with the rest of the Somerset district on the other half.

In addition, the property would be cleaned up and cleared of weeds, underbrush and debris.

The proposal of two single family homes, by necessity, includes the demolition of the existing burned out hulk on the property.

We feel that this represents a good faith proposal for the full and final resolution of all issues involved in this property. I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,



Harry W. Lerch

cc: Ms. Gwen Marcus
Ms. Susan Ringland
Mr. Adnrew Diem
Mr. Howard Rosenberg

bcc: Peter Lamb, Esq.
Robert G. Brewer, Esq.

DEPT\RE\HWL\RINGLAND.LT2

ANDREW H. DIEM, ARCHITECT, 5230 LOUGHBORO RD., N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20016 202-364-8115

October 14, 1994

Ms. Deborah Susan Ringland
5801 West Avenue
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Re: 4722 Dorset Avenue, Somerset, Chevy Chase, Maryland

Dear Ms. Ringland:

Based on your request for a site review to explore the feasibility to restore the structure located at 4722 Dorset Avenue in Somerset, Maryland the following observations are noted.

The structure is a very simple wood frame, single family residence constructed in the last decade of the nineteenth century in the Carpenter Victorian style. The building is located on one side of a parcel of land approximately 37,350 square feet in size. The building does not represent the work of any master and the structure definitely does not exhibit any high ardstic values.

The house was designed as a modified four square plan with a rear appendage. The stair serving the second floor is in the entry hall, with the adjacent large parlor on the front and the small parlor behind on the side of the house. The dining room is behind the entry hall adjacent to the small side parlor. The kitchen was located behind the dining room and the small parlor. Upstairs there is a central hall with one bedroom over the front parlor, one bedroom over the dining room and another bedroom was located over the kitchen with two baths over the small parlor.

In the late 1930's, the house underwent significant interior alterations resulting in a "modernization" through the removal of extensive amounts of the original Victorian embellishments. The fireplace mantels and over mantels were replaced and a large plate glass mirror installed above the front parlor fireplace , the newel posts and related entry hall items were drastically modified in the attempt to bring the house in line with the then fashionable stream lined Art Deco style.

You informed me that after the Second World War, substantial remodeling was done to the interior of the house. On the first floor across the rear, the original kitchen and pantry were combined into a family room, a window, exterior door and the original back porch were removed, and two large, out of character, modern plate glass "picture windows" were installed, substantially altering the rear exterior fenestration of the building. A new smaller porch was created on the side accessible through a door created from the former pantry window. The stairs to the partial basement from the original pantry were repositioned. The original screened porch adjacent to the dining room was removed.

You also informed me that the renovations at that time to the second floor of the house, above the family room, involved reconfiguring two rear bedrooms and the attic stairs into one large bedroom and a "pull down" type attic stair in the hallway. The small bedroom above the small parlor was converted into two bathrooms designed in the style prevalent at the time. The original four bedroom, one bath residence was then a three bedroom two bath structure.

ANDREW H. DIEM, ARCHITECT, 5230 LOUGHBORO RD., N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20016 202-364-8115

Deborah Susan Ringland
October 14, 1994

In December 1978 the building suffered vast architectural and structural ravage from a kitchen fire and the related smoke, water and firemen's damage. The widespread majority of the damage to the building was as a result of the fire and the fireman's force, including the tremendous amount of water used to squelch the extensive fire. The fire originated in the kitchen area then spread to the bedroom above consuming the rear of the house. The fire then engulfed the attic spaces and the bedroom above the dining room. Holes were cut in the roof to vent the structure and an immense quantity of water was dumped on the house in an effort to cease the fire. The extensive damage that was not done by fire and smoke most certainly was done by the water used to quench the fire.

It is understood that after the fire, your parents gave the property and what was left of the family home to you in July 1979. It is also understood that there was no fire insurance settlement nor payment made to either your parents nor you after the fire. Efforts were undertaken by you to make the building secure from the weather and vandals. It was impossible to secure the roof above the rear of the building since the structural roof rafter members disintegrated in the fire and there was nothing to support any weatherproof protection. Any work on that area of the building was extremely dangerous since the fire had made that portion unsafe. The efforts to protect other areas were ineffective due to the extensive fire and related damage and the labor of vandals who removed much of the remaining period details. Relating to your request to now secure the house from the elements of the weather, I find that it is totally impractical, given the frailty of the existing structure, and any efforts to that end would be a complete waste of money.

The residence today is in such a state that it would be impractical to attempt to reconstruct the structure and return the building to the original Victorian style. To try to do so would be beyond reality. The total rear of the building was burnt beyond any practical effort to save. The deterioration of the remaining interior resulted from the firemen's efforts to stop the fire, causing such extensive damage that it would most certainly be necessary to dismantle the structure down to the foundation, label the various members, replace all of the deteriorated structural elements and then reconstruct the building with the very few salvageable original architectural members and new extensive custom made elements to match the deteriorated or missing pieces. Given the extent of this scope of work, the entire reconstructed structure would have to be brought into line with the current building and life safety codes. The very stone foundation the building rests upon many have to be totally rebuilt due to the damage the mortar suffered as a result of the heat from the fire and the water used to extinguish the inferno.

The most practical approach would be the demolition of the existing structure due to the health hazards and extremely unsafe conditions. Attempting to renovate the residence in the current severe condition of deterioration would cause undue financial hardship and deprive you of a reasonable use of the property. Considering the interests of the public in preserving the character of the neighborhood, the general welfare is better served by permitting the demolition of the existing structure and the construction of one or more replacement houses. These residences should be designed in keeping with the architectural character of Somerset.

Very truly yours,

Andrew H. Diem
Registered Architect
#94462

GMR
ARCHITECTS PLANNERS ENGINEERS

ELLIOTT GRILLI, A.A.
SILVIA V. MARCHIANI, A.I.A.
HOWARD J. ROSENBERG, P.E.

October 10, 1994

Ms. Deborah Susan Ringland
6801 West Avenue
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

RE: 4722 Dorset Avenue, Somerset
Chevy Chase, Maryland
GMR, Ltd. Comm. No.: 94099

Dear Ms. Ringland:

Pursuant to your request, I visited the above referenced residence on September 24, 1994 and met with Mr. Andrew Diem, Architect, and you. The purpose of my visit was to familiarize myself with the property and observe the current condition of the building. The following is my report.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The building is a two story Victorian style structure with a partial basement and there is also a small attic. I was told that the building was built during the latter part of the 19th century and has undergone several alterations since then. In December, 1979 a severe fire occurred and the majority of the house toward the rear was destroyed.

The structure is wood frame with ordinary full-thick wood joists mostly 2 x 10's and 2 x 12's and full-thick wood 2 x 4 studs on the interior and exterior. The walls and ceilings typically are plaster on wood lath. Flooring consists of diagonal sheathing. On the day of my visit, the remaining windows and entry doors were covered with plywood or plastic sheeting to keep out the weather and/or vandals. The house has been unoccupied since the fire.

I toured the interior of the house as well as the exterior. Over 50% of the house's structure has been razed and is now missing due to the fire. The balance of the remaining structural elements have been affected either by the fire, water applied by firefighters putting out the fire, termites or wood rot. There is very little left of the structure I consider salvageable for re-use.

7019 MA-[illegible] MARYLAND P.O. BOX 6 CABIN JOHN, MARYLAND 20818 • 301-229-[illegible] FAX: 301-229-[illegible] BALTIMORE: 410-[illegible]

October 10, 1994
RE: 4722 Dorset Avenue, Somerset
Chevy Chase, Maryland
GMR, Ltd. Comm. No.: 94099
Page Two

RECOMMENDATIONS

Inasmuch as there is so little structural elements left which I consider reusable, it is my opinion that the most reasonable course of action to take is to completely demolish the existing structure There is just too much devastation from the effects of the fire and in my judgement it would be economically unfeasible to attempt to restore this building.

Very truly yours,

Howard J. Rosenberg, P.E.
Executive Vice President
GMR, Ltd.

HJR/tlw

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

October 19, 1994

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Gwen Marcus, Historic Preservation Coordinator

SUBJECT: Ringland Property at 4722 Dorset Avenue, Somerset

Approximately one year ago, the Town of Somerset requested that the HPC look into the status of a property at 4722 Dorset Avenue in the Somerset Historic District. This property has been vacant for many years and is in a very deteriorated state.

The DHCD Housing Code Enforcement staff, at the request of the HPC, inspected this property and cited the owner - Deborah Susan Ringland - under the Demolition-by-Neglect provision of the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Since the issuance of the citations, the owner has been working to determine what to do about the property. She has put it on the market, and has had the building analyzed by an architect and by a structural engineer.

A letter signed by the owner's attorney was received on October 18th and is attached. Based on the information from the architect and the structural engineer, the owner has decided to apply for a Historic Area Work Permit to demolish the structure. The permit has not yet been filed, but will be soon.

The attorney for the owner has suggested that the HPC may want to schedule a field inspection of the house so that the Commissioners can personally observe its condition.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION TO CONSIDER DEMOLITION REQUEST ON RINGLAND PROPERTY

On December 7th, the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will consider a demolition request for the house at 4722 Dorset Avenue. Because this house is within the Somerset Historic District, the HPC must act on the request for demolition before any permit can be issued.

The purpose of this article is to provide background information on the history of this property. It does not present the staff's recommendation or the HPC's position on the demolition request. Staff will attend the Town of Somerset meeting on December 5th and will present the staff's recommendations on this issue at that time.

4722 Dorset was one of the original five houses in Somerset and was built by Harvey Wiley around 1891. Wiley was one of the five men who co-founded the Town of Somerset in 1890.

Harvey Wiley was Chief of the Bureau of Chemistry of the Department of Agriculture at the time he purchased the land which would become "Somerset Heights". One of his co-workers, Charles Crampton, helped to create Somerset and became its first mayor.

Wiley was known as the "Father of the Pure Food and Drug Act". On the 50th Anniversary of the act, he was honored with a commemorative stamp. Wiley was a scientific man who felt that harmful adulterants to foods had to be eliminated, and food labels had to be honest. Wiley had been working since the 1880s for pure foods with only moderate success, but his research laid the indisputable groundwork for passage of the Act in 1906.

As the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 made its way through congress, Wiley worked behind the scenes, supplying information and accepting a number of speaking engagements in and around the capital. On June 30th, President Roosevelt signed the bill into law. The bill helped to restore public confidence in the manufacturers of foods and medicines. The labelling requirements and the increased public conscience on the issue helped drive many adulterated foods and patent medicines out of the market.

Wiley built the house at 4722 Dorset in hopes of luring his parents from Indiana. Wiley's parents, however, never moved to the house. Wiley instead rented the property for a number of years before selling it in 1904 to Perry and Mabel Michener. The Micheners sold the property to the Ringlands in 1938.

Arthur Ringland (1882-1981) was a distinguished long time resident of Somerset, active in conservation and humanitarian programs throughout his long career. In 1945, he helped originate the concept of the private voluntary organization that became CARE.

A principal focus of his work was persuading the government to transport food packages to the needy in Europe. Mr. Ringland became known as "the father of CARE" and was honored by the United Nations for his efforts.

All citizens are invited to attend the HPC meeting on December 7th. It will be held at 8787 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring. For more information, contact Gwen Marcus or David Berg at (301) 495-4570.

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties in 4722 Dorset Avenue

From: David Berg, Historic Preservation Planner

Date: December 27, 1994

Subject: Staff Report on 4722 Dorset Avenue (Ringland Property) in the Somerset Historic District (HPC Case No 35/36-94D). Application for demolition by Deborah Susan Ringland.

Ms. Ringland, the owner of 4722 Dorset Avenue, has requested a postponement of her appearance before the Commission until the meeting of February 8, 1995. Staff has accordingly rescheduled the case for that date.

At the request of the applicant and the Town of Somerset, staff is sending its report out early so that all interested parties may have time to consider the staff's recommendations. Enclosed, please find a copy of the staff report. If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 495-4570.

Enclosures

Sent to:
Walter Behr
D. Susan Ringland
Harry Lerch
Commission (addressed to HPC)

Memorandum

Subject: the Ringland Property December 28,1994
To : the Mayor and Town Council of Somerset
From : Susan Ringland

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify in advance the specifics of our attendance at the January 4 meeting of the Town Council.

In a mid-December conversation with my attorney, Ms Gwen Marcus of the Historic Preservation Commission staff said that the staff report on our application for demolition of the derelict house at 4722 Dorset Avenue would not actually be ready till on or about December 28. In reply, and noting that we should require at least 30 days from the time the report was received to prepare detailed expert responses to the specifics of the report, he said that, in the circumstances, we could not be ready for the January HPC hearing, and, accordingly, requested a continuation. Ms Marcus asked that he put our request in writing, but was otherwise agreeable to the continuation.

For the same reason, with the staff report not available till December 28, we cannot be ready to present our case , or enter into discussion of it or of Ms Marcus's presentation, at the January4 meeting of the Town Council. In asking us to attend anyway, Mr Knopf and Mr Besharov assured us that the meeting is to be "informal", that we need be present "only to listen",and that "no vote is to be taken".

We note in the Town Journal that "possible development of the property" is also on the agenda. I am not seeking resubdivision or development.

As I have previously written to the Mayor, it has always been my intention to resolve the problem of my parents' fire-ruined home. They themseves never gave up wanting to return to it, and, when I became the owner, it was my hope as well. In this coming year, I might add, the Ringlands will be a fourth-generation Somerset family. Unhappy circumstances frustrated my parents' hope, and reality has frustrated mine. I am sure, however, that my interests, those of the neighbors and of the Town coincide-- in that everyone wants to see this sad old house replaced with something that will be a credit to the community.

LERCH, EARLY & BREWER
CHARTERED
LAW OFFICES

SUITE 380
3 BETHESDA METRO CENTER
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814-5367

TELEPHONE: (301) 986-1300
FACSIMILE: (301) 986-0332

HARRY W. LERCH
RONALD L. EARLY
ROBERT G. BREWER, JR.
ERIC M. CORE
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OF COUNSEL
CHARLES L. WILKES
CONSTANCE G. LOHSE
ROBERT L. SALOSCHIN
ELIZABETH J. WEISBERG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PETER T. MICHAELS ◊

WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE
1800 M STREET, N.W.
SUITE 600
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
(202) 331-7120

VIRGINIA OFFICE
8308 LEE HIGHWAY
SUITE 1100
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22031
(703) 273-5811

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**MEMBER MD BAR ONLY
***MEMBER MD & VA BAR
◊CPA, MBA, NOT BAR MEMBER

HENRY F. LERCH 1890-1986
WILTON H. WALLACE 1900-1989

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NUMBER:
(301)

November 21, 1994

VIA TELEFAX #495-1307

Mr. David Berg
Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring Maryland 20910

Re: Ringland House (Somerset)

Dear David:

The purpose of this letter is to request a continuance of the public appearance now scheduled before the HPC on December 7th. The letter is intended to confirm my conversations with you this afternoon and with Gwen last week.

At the conclusion of the tour of the Ringland house last Thursday, as she was leaving, Gwen said that she would be out of town until the first of December. She indicated that she hoped that the staff report would be released on that date, Thursday, December 1. From Gwen's comments made during the tour and prior to it, there appears to be a possibility (if not a probability) that the staff recommendation will include a requirement that a portion of the house be restored.

When I spoke to Gwen on Thursday and Friday, she indicated that the recommendation might be that the porch, front (northern) rooms, and the south western rooms be restored, and the rear and south eastern rooms be demolished. She was very careful to state, however, that she had not spoken with you and Mike, and that she was not at all certain what form the final recommendation might take. She also indicated a strong desire to avoid the stalemate situation which has existed in the case of the Gibson house in Clarksburg.

LAW OFFICES
LERCH, EARLY & BREWER, CHARTERED

It is our preliminary understanding that any requirement for renovation or restoration would be extremely expensive, and would raise serious issues as to the economic viability of attempting to proceed on a modest two lot redevelopment plan.

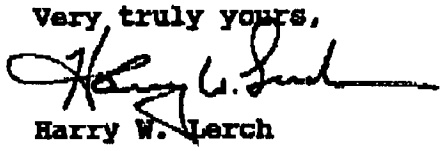
In light of the importance of the economic hardship issues in this case, however, we do not want to operate on guesswork or assumptions. Should the staff report recommend any renovation or restoration, we would then want to have competent construction analysts determine the cost of the recommended work, and then have our real estate consultants advise us of the effect of such requirements on the marketing of the property and the expected return to Ms. Ringland. It will take more than two or three days to do this analysis.

Even if we receive the staff report by fax on Thursday, December 1, we will not have time to do the necessary analyses by the HPC meeting on Wednesday, December 7; we will, of course, have even less time to prepare for the Somerset Town Council Meeting on Monday, December 5. We understand that the next Town Council meeting will not be until early January.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request that the HPC's consideration of our demolition permit/Historic Area Work Permit be continued until the first HPC meeting in January. Of course, if the staff should agree with our request for demolition and replacement with two compatible homes, then further analyses would not be necessary and the matter could proceed with the HPC on December 7.

We would appreciate as prompt a response as possible because the Town is attempting to set its agenda for Monday night. As we discussed on the phone, I understand that you would like to review this request with Gwen before responding. I told you that since I will be out of the office tomorrow and Wednesday, I would appreciate your notifying Robby Brewer or Marty Hutt of your response. They can be reached at 986-1300.

Very truly yours,



Harry W. Lerch

HWL:sko
dept\re\hwl\48134\berghpc.lt

LERCH, EARLY & BREWER
CHARTERED
LAW OFFICES

SUITE 380
3 BETHESDA METRO CENTER
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814-5367

TELEPHONE: (301) 986-1300
FACSIMILE: (301) 986-0332

HARRY W. LERCH
RONALD L. EARLY
ROBERT G. BREWER, JR.
ERIC M. CORE
GEORGE F. PAXTON
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ALEXANDRA F. NEDIN**

OF COUNSEL
CHARLES L. WILKES
CONSTANCE B. LOHSE
ROBERT L. SALOSCHIN
ELIZABETH J. WEISBERG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PETER T. MICHAELS ◊

WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE
1800 M STREET, N.W.
SUITE 600
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
(202) 331-7120

VIRGINIA OFFICE
9302 LEE HIGHWAY
SUITE 1100
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22031
(703) 273-6911

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***MEMBER MD & VA BAR
◊CPA, MBA, NOT BAR MEMBER

HENRY F. LERCH 1880-1966
WILTON H. WALLACE 1880-1958

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NUMBER:
(301)

December 28, 1994

Ms. Gwen Marcus
Historic Preservation Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Ringland Property, Somerset

Dear Gwen:

Confirming our recent telephone conversations, the purpose of this letter is to request a continuance, until February 8, of the HPC's consideration of the Ringland demolition permit application. We have been advised by our consultants that it will take at least thirty days for them to review, analyze, and prepare a response to any proposal which would require the partial preservation of the partially burned structure.

We understand that the matter will be removed from the upcoming agenda and moved to February 8th. As we gain a better grasp on the various issues, we hope to be in touch with you further.

Very truly yours,

Harry W. Lerch

LAW OFFICES
Lerch, Early & Brewer, Chartered
Suite 380
Three Bethesda Metro Center
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-5367
Telephone: (301) 986-1300
Telecopy: (301) 986-0332

Telecopier Cover Letter

Date: February 1, 1995 Time: 1:30 PM

Client #: 48134.001

Please deliver the following pages to:

Name: Gwen Marcus
Telecopier Number: 495-1307

Sender:

Name: Harry W. Lerch
Direct Dial #: (301) 657-0161

We are transmitting 3 pages including this cover sheet.

Message: I was going to try to call you, but I got tied up with clients. Please call me - Harry

If all pages are not transmitted properly, please call Lerch, Early & Brewer at 301/986-1300

Thank You

Ms. Gwen Marcus
Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Md.

Re: Ringland House/Somerset

Dear Gwen:

Section 24A(b) (6) says "The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the chapter, if it finds that: (6) In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district, with the interests of the public from the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by granting the permit."

At the present time, Ms. Ringland's HAWP application requesting a demolition permit contains no "alternative proposal" for the commission to consider. This is because, at the present time, Ms. Ringland has not found a purchaser for the property. She, herself, is financially unable to propose or implement any alternative proposals.

While she could proceed with the HAWP on other grounds under Section 24A (b), we have not received the report from our expert fire damage inspector. Far more importantly, Ms. Ringland sincerely believes that the public interest would be best served if the application included one or more alternative proposals for consideration by the commission. These could address architectural as well as subdivision issues in a permanent and final fashion. Such a proposal would, of necessity, have to come from the purchaser or ultimate user of the property.

Rather than having the application considered in a vacuum with no alternatives, we would request that the case be continued to allow a reasonable time to find a purchaser, and for the purchaser to submit one or more meaningful alternatives to the commission for its consideration.

As the denial of a demolition permit by the HPC would simply cast a further pall on sales efforts, she would respectfully withdraw the permit rather than have it considered in its present form.

Although we understand that this request is somewhat unusual, it is motivated entirely in an effort to cooperate in achieving a meaningful and permanent solution to the issues involved. As a gesture of good faith, it might be appropriate for us to submit a periodic status report to you.

We look forward to your response, and would be happy to meet with you to explore possible alternatives.

Very truly yours,

Harry W. Lerch

cc: Town of Somerset

marcus.lt2

LERCH, EARLY & BREWER
CHARTERED
LAW OFFICES

SUITE 380
3 BETHESDA METRO CENTER
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814-5367

TELEPHONE: (301) 986-1300
FACSIMILE: (301) 986-0332

HARRY W. LERCH
RONALD L. EARLY
ROBERT G. BREWER, JR.
ERIC M. CORE
GEORGE F. MAXTON
MARVIN J. HUTT
STANLEY J. REED
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TAMARA A. STONER**

OF COUNSEL
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CONSTANCE B. LOHSE
ROBERT L. SALOSCHIN
ELIZABETH J. WEISBERG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PETER T. MICHAELS ◊

WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE
1900 M STREET, N.W.
SUITE 600
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
(202) 331-7135

VIRGINIA OFFICE
9302 LEE HIGHWAY
SUITE 1100
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22031
(703) 273-5011

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HENRY F. LERCH 1880-1948
WILTON H. WALLACE 1930-1958

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NUMBER:
(301)

Via Telecopier

March 29, 1995

Ms. Gwen Marcus
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

RE: Ringland Case

Dear Gwen:

We received your message regarding postponement of the Ringland Case. Mrs. Ringland has had a personal family emergency and will not be able to appear before the Historic Preservation Committee on the April 12th. We would therefore ask for a postponement of the case. We understand that you will be out of the office for approximately one month and therefore the case cannot be considered until late May or early June. We obviously have no problem with this.

We appreciate your continued support and understanding. I will be out of the office until Tuesday, April 4th. If you need to discuss the status of the case before that time you can call Cindy Bar in my office at 657-0181. Thank you for your assistance.

Very truly yours,

Harry

Harry W. Lerch

R:\dept\re\cmb\48134gm.lt

8/4/95 AH

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring Maryland 20910-3760

August 4, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: Applicant
Interested Property Owners
Local Advisory Panel

FROM: Gwen Marcus, Historic Preservation Coordinator Gwen Marcus
Design, Zoning, and Preservation Division
M-NCPPC

SUBJECT: Historic Area Work Permit Application for 4722 Dorset Avenue, Somerset

---

At the request of the property owner, the review of the Historic Area Work Permit application for 4722 Dorset Avenue has been postponed from the August 9th HPC agenda to September 13th.

Approximately two weeks before the September 13th meeting, you will receive a notice and a copy of the agenda.

LERCH, EARLY & BREWER
CHARTERED
LAW OFFICES

SUITE 380
3 BETHESDA METRO CENTER
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814-5367

TELEPHONE: (301) 986-1300
FACSIMILE: (301) 986-0332

HARRY W. LERCH
RONALD L. EARLY
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PETER T. MICHAELS ◊

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SUITE 600
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
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HENRY F. LERCH 1950-1988
WILTON H. WALLACE 1950-1969

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NUMBER:
(301)

July 27, 1995

The Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission
c/o Ms. Gwen Marcus
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Deborah Susan Ringland Property
4722 Dorset Avenue, Somerset

Dear Commission Members:

As you may recall, we represent Deborah Susan Ringland, the owner of 4722 Dorset Ave, Somerset. Ms. Ringland has had an application for an historic area work permit (a demolition permit) pending for a substantial period.

The purpose of this letter is to request one single and final continuance from the August 9th meeting to the first September meeting. We understand that you have indicated an unwillingness to grant any further continuances. I would like to emphasize, however, that this request is only to continue the matter for one single month, and that the applicant agrees that this will be the final request for a continuance. Should any further delay be encountered, Ms. Ringland would agree that the current demolition permit application will be withdrawn and refiled at a later date when all elements can be totally completed.

Please understand that the present continuance request (like the previous one(s)) is made necessary by the frustrating behavior of specialist reconstruction/rehabilitation firms who have been engaged as experts. Since last December, Ms. Ringland had found herself obliged to deal with a number of these firms, one after the other. Because of her limited resources, Ms. Ringland has found herself literally at their mercy. Typically, after inspecting the property, and agreeing to take the job and then delaying for several weeks, they announce that they are backing out for one reason or another, totally unrelated to the merits of the case. Reasons have included the smallness of the job, the press of other commitments, and similar excuses.

LAW OFFICES
LERCH, EARLY & BREWER, CHARTERED

The Montgomery County Historic
Preservation Commissin
July 27, 1995
Page -2-

Notification has invariably been given to Ms. Ringland too late to retain another firm and obtain its report in time for the next round of hearings. The firm that Ms. Ringland has been dealing with for a while has just informed her that its report will not be ready as requested by the 7th of August, the date of the next Somerset L.A.P. hearing. Nor, of course, is it ready to include in your current packet as requested by your staff.

We respectfully request that you respond as promptly as possible so that we will have a reasonable time before the August 9 meeting to take further action if this becomes necessary.

We thank you for your favorable consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,

Harry W. Lerch

4722 DORSET —

1ST FLOOR INTERIOR
EAST ROOM

1st Floor East Room - Interior

4722 DORSET AVE

Easy Room Interior 1st Floor

PAPER

SEPT 94

PAPER

SEPT 94

PAPER

SEPT 94

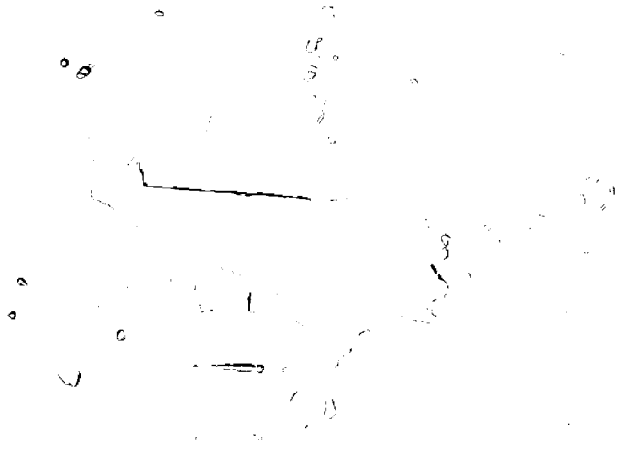
PAPER

SEPT 94

4722 DORSET AVE

East Room Interior (NB floor caved in)

4722 Dorset Ave



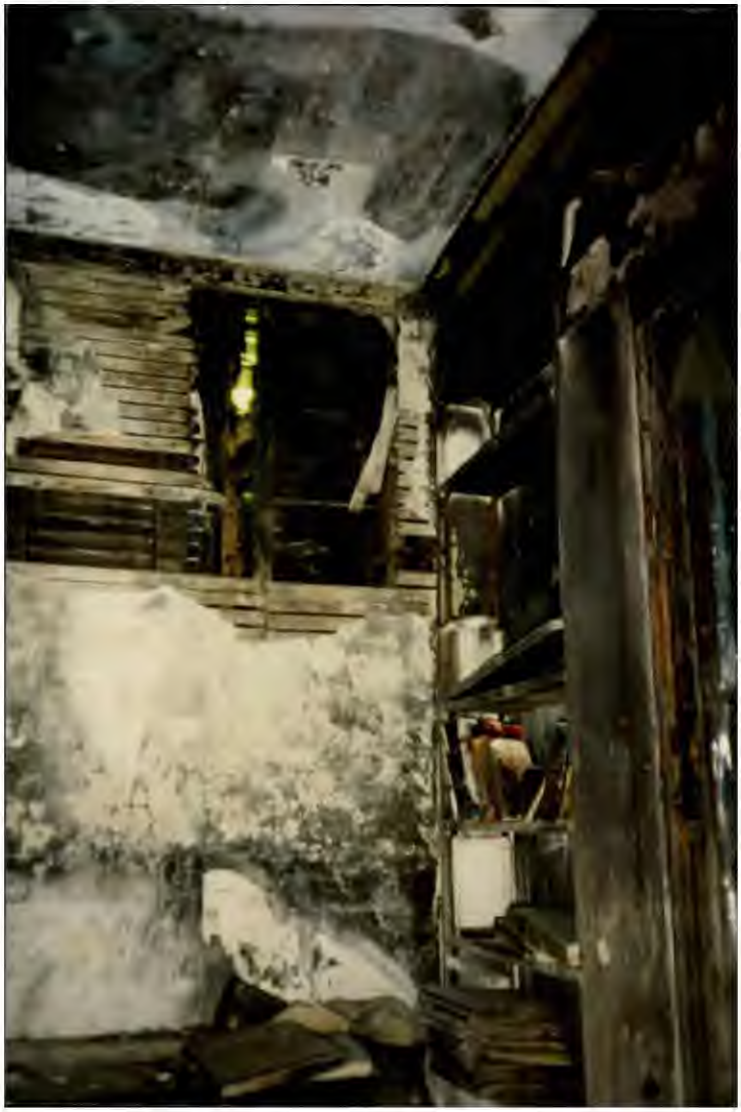
4722 DORSET AVE - 1ST FLR - EAST ROOM

4722 DORSET – 1ST FLR – EAST ROOM

4722 DORSET - 1ST FLR - EAST ROOM

4722 DORSET - 1ST FLOOR - EAST ROOM

#222 BOOSTER
1ST FLR
EAST ROOM



4722 DORSET – 1ST FLR N/W ROOM

4722 DORSET –

1ST FLOOR INTERIOR

WEST ROOM

ATTIC

N.B. Plywood boarding
to keep out
weather.

2nd Flr East Room Interior

2nd Floor East Room Interior

4722 DORSET AVE

2nd Floor East Room Interior

4722 DORSET AVE

N. B.
Plastic used
to keep out
weather –

4722 DORSET –

2ND FLOOR INTERIOR
EAST ROOM

4722 DORSET - 2ND FLR - EAST ROOM

4722 DORSET –

2ND FLOOR INTERIOR
SOUTH ROOM

4722 DORSET - 2ND FLR - SOUTH ROOM FACING S. & E.

4722 DORSET —

ATTIC (INTERIOR)

Amic

ATTIC

ATTIC

Attić

22-046.15 X153071 0124-1/8 N12

Attic

22 Oct.16 X162071 0124-1 N 6-12

attic

up

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22 Oct. 8 2009021 012341 N 4N2

4722 DORSET - ATTIC

4722 DORSET - ATTIC

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