



Township of Maplewood  
Historic Preservation Commission

A-7  
7-14-15

June 15, 2015

Ms. Susan K. Lippy  
Executive Director  
Winchester Gardens  
333 Elmwood Avenue  
Maplewood, NJ 07040

Dear Ms. Lippy;

The Maplewood Historic Preservation Commission appreciates that Springpoint Management took the time to present their plans for expansion. We recognize that we have no regulatory role over the Winchester Gardens buildings, as they are not officially designated as a local landmark. However, the historic Ward Homestead, designed by noted architect John Russell Pope in the heart of the complex is definitely locally significant and we are encouraged by the spirit in which the organization approached us for our input.

We understand the need for the addition of a skilled nursing facility, and since this new building does not physically impact any of the existing historic structures, we support its construction as presented. Our concern relates to the structures that were created originally for the Winchester Gardens facility.

While we acknowledge the desire of the Springpoint organization to expand in order to enhance the marketability of the facility, we are concerned that the plans seem to diminish, if not ignore, the inherent value that exists in the original historic buildings of the campus. The buildings were designed by one of the major architects of the period and the historic design and materials represent an era of quality craftsmanship that is generally not recreated. The symmetrical design and fine finishes are immediately obvious upon walking into the lobby and common areas of the "manor house." One sees immediately that this is different from other, recently constructed facilities. Indeed, testimony from some of the residents at the presentation before the Historic Preservation Commission illustrated the importance that the aesthetic of the building had in their decision to live there. Pride of place was clearly evident, and residents were eager to embrace the historic and design heritage of their home.

Regrettably, the plans we reviewed seemed to violate, if not destroy, some of the important elements of design that are unique to the original buildings. In particular, the proposed additions to the manor house remove the serenity of the beautifully defined main hallway and conference room by introducing asymmetrical open areas that have no central focal point. The proposed wings at the rear of the main building introduce design elements (windows, roof lines and materials) not at all sympathetic to those of the existing building.

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The Commission fully acknowledges the design challenges posed when attempting to modify existing historic structures. We would hope that the plans for an expanded Winchester Gardens would be more reflective of the unique qualities of the very special buildings that comprise the core of the campus. We encourage Springpoint Management to re-visit the plans for the project.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia Kurshan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Virginia Kurshan, Chair

Cc: Vic DeLuca, Mayor  
Tom Carlson, Chair, Maplewood Planning Board