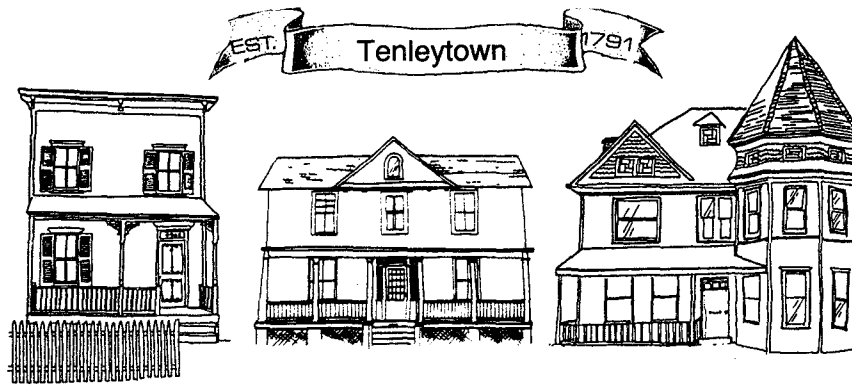




TENLEYTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

21 April 2008

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, #200
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Board Members::

Re: BZA Appeal # 17747

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 17747
EXHIBIT NO. 23

The Tenleytown Historical Society Board of Directors joins with ANC3E and neighbors in opposing the appeal by developer Stephanie Wallace with regard to 5013 Belt Road, NW.

The house that existed on this site was one of the oldest dwellings in Tenleytown. No building permit has been found for 5013 Belt Road, suggesting that it was built prior to the institution of a building permit requirement in the late 1870s. This assumption is supported by an 1878 Hopkins map, for which the information was likely gathered sometime earlier than the publication date, that shows a row of houses along Brookeville (Belt) Road in what appears to be the location of the 5000 block of Belt Road today. One of the names associated with these houses is King. The Kings are one of Tenleytown's original families, a number of whose members are buried in what is now known as The Methodist Cemetery, but in its early days was known simply as the Tenleytown cemetery. The 1900 Census lists several Kings, including a Charles King on Belt Road. According to Charles King's granddaughter, she, her three siblings and their parents lived at 5013 Belt Road for a time. There is little question that 5013 Belt Road was a house of historic value. And though unproven, King family lore, according to the granddaughter, held that timbers from Fort Reno were used in its construction. Though the house was not officially designated historic, its importance to Tenleytown's history and its provenance were real.

Mt. Airy, in which the house was located, was identified in the Tenleytown Historical Society's 2003 *Historic Resources Survey of Tenleytown* as an area worthy of further research and consideration as a historic district.

So Ms. Wallace's cavalier and progressive destruction of the house destroyed not just a building but a significant piece of local history. For a lover of historic buildings, her method was akin to tearing the wings off an insect instead of allowing it a clean and merciful (or in the case of a building, duly noticed raze permitted) death.

I first happened on this situation by accident. Occasionally I drove along the 5000 block of Belt Road to "visit" 5013. First it was sold, then there was digging. And then the back of the house disappeared, with little attempt made to secure the remainder from the elements. Bit by bit, parts of the house were removed. One day two workmen were tearing off what looked like asbestos siding - no protective apparatus, just flinging it away from the house. Then one day I notice a STOP WORK order. For a while things seemed quiet, but then I went by and there were men working. The STOP WORK order was still on the door.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17747
EXHIBIT NO. 23

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2008 APR 22 AM 11:10

In the fall of 2006, I began contacting Bill Crewes who was, at that time, the DCRA employee responsible for permits. I was still hopeful that the new owner planned to retain the remaining part of the house as a nod to its and the area's history. About that time I encountered a neighbor who advised me that the sole reason for retention of part of the house was to grandfather a 5 foot side yard! Mr. Crewes attended an ANC3E meeting in October 2006 - to talk about his work in general, not specifically about this house. I did, however, take advantage of the opportunity to ask him about 5013 Belt, and was told he had the file on his desk and to "bug him" if he didn't get back to me. I sent Mr. Crewes several additional emails and telephoned at least once. I never had a response. And then Mr. Crewes was gone from DCRA!

The Rock Creek West Element of the new DC Comprehensive Plan, in its Overview, states, "Rock Creek West's most outstanding characteristic is its stable, attractive neighborhoods.....Although these communities retain individual and distinctive identities, they share a commitment toconserving neighborhood quality." It is that neighborhood quality, in addition to history, that Ms. Wallace is destroying. The size of the house she started to build at 5013 Belt road, is out of scale for its long but very narrow lot, both in height and width. Perhaps a skilled and creative architect could have devised a way to build on the lot that was respectful of the immediate neighbors and community and who could have incorporated at least a part of the original house into the new one. This was done with great success to an old farmhouse moved decades ago from its site on what is now 46th Street, NW to Verplanck Place, NW. The old house was retained and addition built around it.

That Ms. Wallace should be granted the right to continue construction at 5013 Belt Road serves no interest but perhaps her own - not DC law, not history, and most assuredly not neighbors. The only permit she might reasonably be granted is one to raze the inappropriate structure she has begun.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jane Waldmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jane" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Waldmann".

Jane Waldmann

Member, Board of Directors

Attachments: 1878 Hopkins map showing Charles King's house
2003 photo of 5013 Belt Road, NW from *Tenleytown Historic Resources Survey*
Copies of emails sent to Bill Crewes
Charles King's descendants 5013 Belt Road prior to 1935

OF
FIFTEEN MILES AROUND

WASHINGTON

INCLUDING

THE COUNTY OF

PRINCE GEORGE

MARYLAND

Compiled, Drawn and Published from Actual Surveys
BY

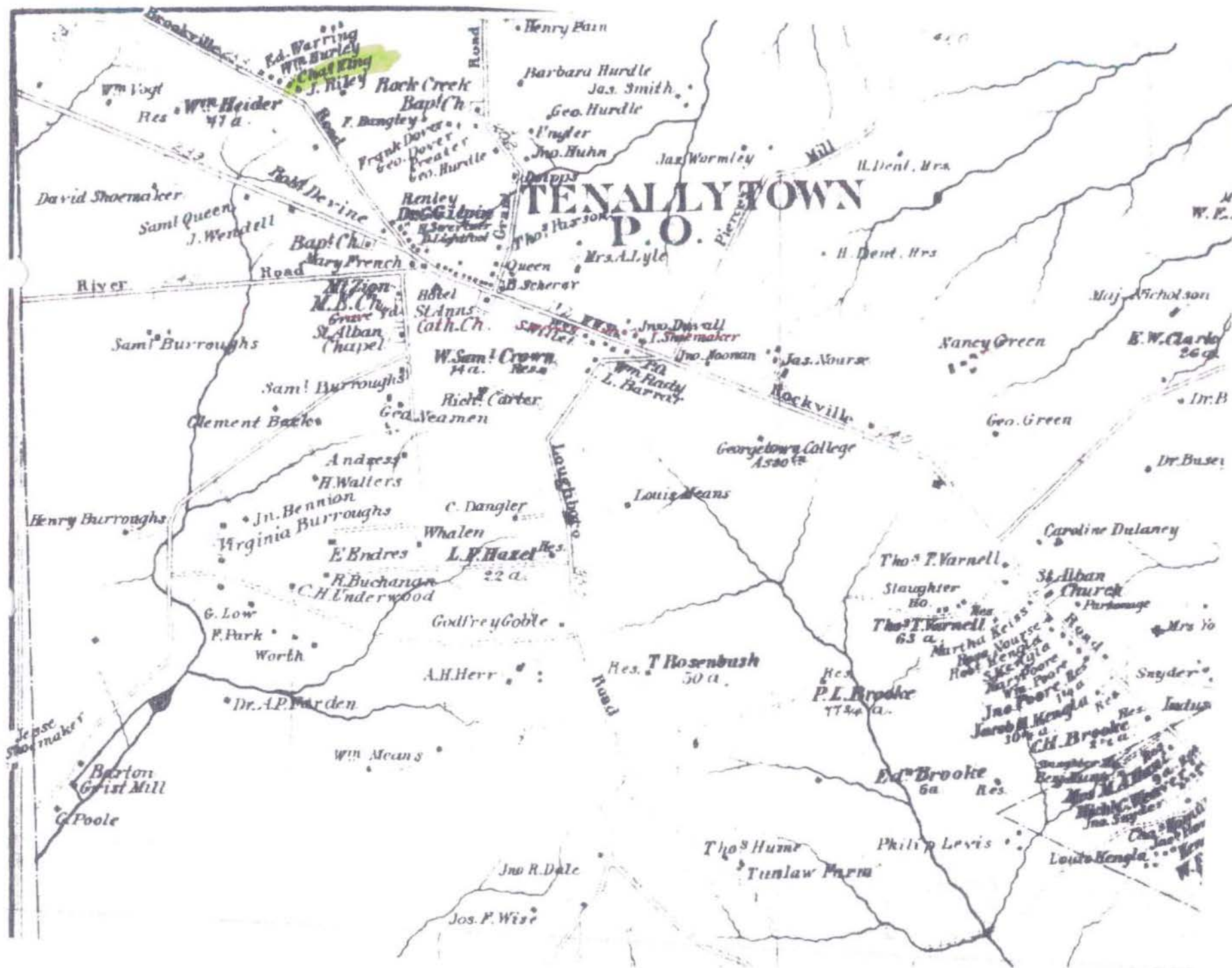
G. M. HOPKINS, C.E.

320 WALNUT STREET

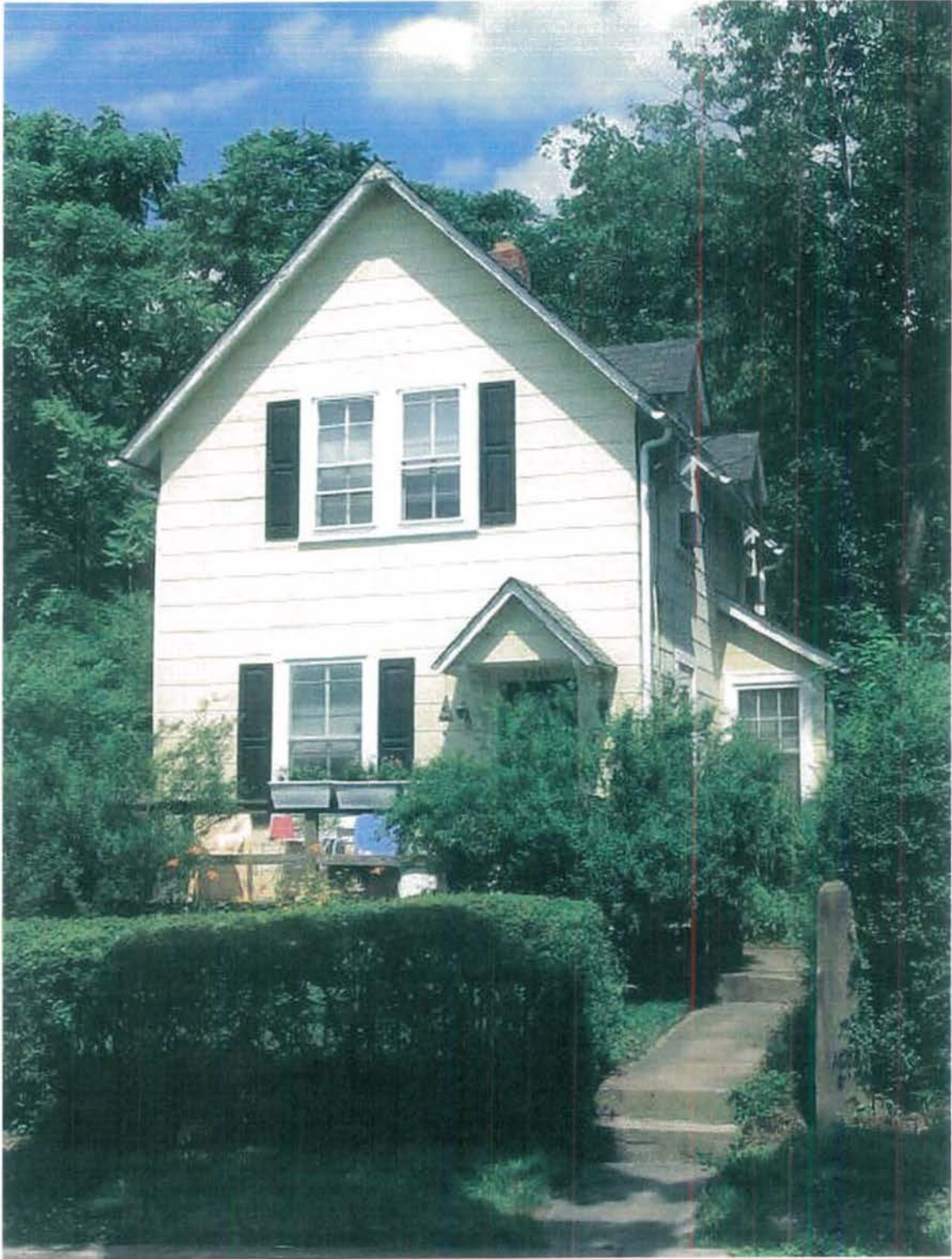
PHILADELPHIA.

1878.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the Year AD 1878 by G. M. Hopkins, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington



5012 Beet Road NW
2003 Tenleytown Historic Resources Survey



JWaldmann

From: "Jane Waldmann" <jciw-centernet@erols.com>
To: "Bill Crews" <Bill.Crews@dc.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2006 8:53 AM
Subject: 5013 Belt Road, NW

Dear Mr. Crewes,

I am looking forward to your meeting with community members tomorrow night at St. Mary's Armenian Church.

I am concerned, for a variety of reasons, about the (remaining section of) house at 5013 Belt Road. What remains is very old - and it is rumored that timbers from Fort Reno were used in its construction. While that will likely never be verified, the house is one of the earliest in our area and as a member of the Tenleytown Historical Society board, I was delighted that the original house, tiny, was not razed.

I go by regularly to see what if any progress has been made. I had hoped to find the owner's name on the permit so I could contact him/her to express thanks for retaining the original house - and, of course, to find out what was planned. In well over a year, nothing seems to have been accomplished. Permit # B477334 - for "underpinning" expired 10/4/06. Permit # B91338, issued 4/21/06 - for "amendement" (!) - expires 4/21/07. An orange notice dated 6/30/06 notes an "unsafe structure" and a work stoppage.

All of this brings up the general question of how long a permit is issued for - 1 year???
And - once work has begun on a site, is there a time frame within which it must be finished? The neighbors are surely tired of the mess next door.

Another question - is the ANC supposed to be notified of ANY raze requests in its jurisdiction - whether by owner or not?

Thanks for your help with the Belt Road house mystery. See you tomorrow.

Jane Waldmann

4/17/2008

JWaldmann

From: "Jane Waldmann" <jciw-centernet@erols.com>
To: "Bill Crews" <Bill.Crews@dc.gov>
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2006 10:20 AM
Attach: 5013 Belt Road 10 09 2005 - 2.jpg; 5013 Belt Road 10 09 2005 rear.jpg
Subject: 5013 Belt Road

Dear Bill,

As you suggested, I am reminding you about this property - the attached photos were taken before the siding was removed. I went by yesterday and the property appears unchanged.

I really hope you can provide some information about this. Thank you.

Jane Waldmann
Tenleytown Historical Society board member

4/17/2008





JWaldmann

From: "Jane Waldmann" <jciw-centernet@erols.com>
To: "Bill Crews" <Bill.Crews@dc.gov>
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2006 5:06 PM
Subject: 5013 Belt Road

Dear Bill,

I've just been by 5013 Belt Road and note that a new foundation is in place and there is a crew backfilling. The stop work order is still on the door!

While there I met the next door neighbor to the south. I remarked on the remaining section of house being one of the very oldest in Tenleytown and wondered why it was saved. The neighbor said that it wasn't altruism, but rather had to do with zoning. Can you tell me specifically what that might be? It sounds to me as if perhaps this should have come to the ANC for review.

Before the project goes any further, can you provide some clarification? Thank you.

Jane Waldmann
Board member
Tenleytown Historical Society

4/17/2008

JWaldmann

From: "Jane Waldmann" <jciw-centernet@erols.com>
To: "Bill Crews" <Bill.Crews@dc.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 06, 2006 10:31 AM
Subject: 5013 Belt Road NW

Good morning Mr. Crews,

I have sent you several emails and at end of last week telephoned you about this property. Your assistant took a message.

You will perhaps recall that we spoke about this property when you came to ANC3E's special meeting. At that time you said that you had pulled the file. That was several weeks ago.

Work has resumed on the property. At the time it resumed the stop work order was still posted. That work is causing damage to the neighbor's property and I understand from him that he has been told that it is a "civil matter" - requiring him to file suit for redress. Surely DC law has some provision that protects abutting property owners from both damage and the requirement that they spend money on suits!

I understand from the neighbor that the very small portion of the former dwelling still standing was retained in order to qualify for an 'addition' rather than new construction - thereby grandfathering a 5' side yard. If this is legal, it should not be.

I would appreciate some response from you as to the current status of permits on the site, whether or not a variance was required, etc.

Thank you.

Jane Waldmann
Tenleytown Historical Society

4/17/2008

Turkeytown Historical Society in action
Hemp family descendants photo 1935
at 5013 Belmont Ave

