



Plymouth Meeting Historical Society

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Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors
Whitemarsh Township Planning Commission
616 Germantown Pike
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

January 16, 2002

RE: The Hill at Whitemarsh Development

Dear Planning Commission Members and Board of Supervisors,

Last January, the Board of Directors of the Plymouth Meeting Historical Society entered an objection to the proposed rezoning of portions of the historic Erdenheim Farm and the development plans for Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), the Hill at Whitemarsh. Concerns included the loss of an important historical resource, the loss of open space, and the environmental sensitivity of the area.

Members of the Historical Society's Advocacy Committee have reviewed revised plans for the CCRC, and believe the agreements reached between Whitemarsh Retirement Partners, the Founders of the Hill at Whitemarsh, and several community groups to be a vast improvement. The revised plans provide an achievable compromise and appear to address the original concerns and objections of the Society.

As noted in the past, historic preservation must encompass more than just the built environment. Historic landscapes, buffer zones and open space are equally essential. The revised CCRC plan will meet these objectives through:

- Protecting the landscape and scenic vista with the relocation and clustering of the CCRC;
- Providing a 12-acre buffer zone with a conservation easement;
- Protecting open space with an option to purchase 97 acres of Erdenheim Farm as well as the possibility of future such options;
- Demonstrating a commitment to the Township and the community with a financial commitment toward the purchase option;
- Establishing the Whitemarsh-Wissahickon Association, an alliance of community groups pursuing complementary missions.

As the revised CCRC plan addresses and resolves earlier objections the Society, the Board of the Plymouth Meeting Historical Society is now in support of the Whitemarsh Retirement Partners application and proposed rezoning ordinance.

Very truly yours,

Charles P. Lohmann, Jr.
President, Plymouth Meeting Historical Society Board of Directors