

**Certificate of Review  
for 342 Ridge Road**

Application for Subdivision

HPC2002-050101

June 17, 2002

The application for a subdivision permit submitted to the Town of Washington Grove Planning Commission by Fangshou Hsu proposes to subdivide the one acre lot at 342 Ridge Road into two parcels: one of 18,185 sf containing the existing one story house and the other of 25,890 sf to contain an additional house on the northernmost part.

The application received by the Historical Preservation Committee consisted of a drawing of the plat, forest conservation plan and a proposed Public Improvements Agreement. The size and design of the house was not provided.

The commission will look at the following criteria for its comments on subdivisions:

- Location in relation to contributing structures/districts
- Configuration of the lots
- Relation/orientation to the public way
- Viewsheds from the public way

The application is being reviewed for impact on the historic character of Washington Grove. The property is located in the area of Lower Ridge Road known as Washington Grove Hills annexed into the Town within the last few years. As such no structures were indicated as contributing on the application for nomination to the National Register. No neighboring structures have been considered as yet for addition to the list adopted by the HPC. The property nevertheless has indirect impact on the remainder of the Town and direct impact on the character of Washington Grove Hills.

Washington Grove Hills is characterized by long, thin semi-wooded lots of an acre or more laid out in a single line along lower Ridge Road. The modest one and two story houses date from the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and front the road 50' - 100' back. Three new houses are under construction on the property immediately to the west. The subdivision proposes dividing the lot into roughly a front half and a back half with a narrow easement for a driveway at the eastern boundary. It is our understanding that this type of subdivision of existing lots will gradually become the norm in this portion of the Town and thus will become eventually compatible.

The symbol for the house shown on the drawing orients to its new driveway and not to the existing houses, new houses on the subdivided lot to the west, or to the road; i.e. it exists in isolation rather than relating to the neighborhood. We suggest that the new structure front to the west to complement or better form an ensemble with the new houses being constructed on the adjacent properties to the west. This would be even better if they could participate in the common driveway easement already in effect and thus eliminate the new driveway altogether.

Finally, the impact of the proposed house on views from Ridge Road and the neighborhood is dependent on scale and massing of the proposed structure, which is not described in the submission. Though the house is set well back from the road, it is evident from the new houses

on the adjacent property to the west that it indeed will be very visible, and can have a dominating effect on the feel of the neighborhood. We thus encourage the design of the house to take this possible negative impact into consideration and be more compatible in scale and massing with the older existing houses along Ridge Road than the new ones.

We encourage the applicant to bring in plans for the house early in the design or selection process for consultation with the HPC on ways to achieve compatibility before the building permit stage.

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Bob Booher, Chair  
Historic Preservation Commission

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Date

Cc: Applicant  
Mayor  
Planning Commission