

TIMBERLAWN (M: 30-11)
**AN AMENDMENT TO THE MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC
PRESERVATION**



Description

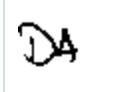
The Planning Board will receive public testimony, hold a worksession, and determine whether Timberlawn should be listed on the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* and the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.



Serena Bolliger Cultural Resource Planner II, Countywide Planning & Policy,
serena.bolliger@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-1329



Rebecca Ballo, Historic Preservation Supervisor, Countywide Planning & Policy,
rebecca.ballo@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-563-3404



David Anspacher, Chief, Countywide Planning & Policy,
david.anspacher@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-2191

SUMMARY

- Timberlawn, an early twentieth century dwelling at 5700 Sugarbush Lane, is located approximately three miles south of downtown Rockville. The home consists of a central two-and-a-half-story, side-gable house constructed ca. 1901 and two, single-story, side-gable wings added in 1930. The house and a non-historic garage are located on a roughly rectangular 1.38-acre lot bounded by single-family dwellings to the west and south, Sugarbush Lane to the north, and Snowshoe Lane to the east.
- In 1900, John Joy and Elizabeth Edson purchased approximately 280 acres of land just south of Rockville. They commissioned their nephew, a young architect named Arthur Heaton who would eventually become a master architect, to design a summer home on their farm estate. Heaton renovated the home for the subsequent owners, Karl and Mary Graff Corby, in 1930.
- Eunice Kennedy and Sargent Shriver rented the house and associated estate for approximately 18 years beginning in 1961 when the family moved to the area to work in politics alongside President John F. Kennedy. Eunice Shriver, a lifelong advocate for intellectual disability rights, ran a week-long summer day camp for children with intellectual disabilities on the estate for seven years. This unique summer camp provided a transformative experience for its participants and staff and inspired the creation of the Special Olympics.
- The Timberlawn estate was purchased in 1979 and subdivided for residential development. This home is the only extant portion of the estate.
- In 2022, the current owner requested that Montgomery Planning evaluate the property for listing in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* based on its association with Eunice Shriver and the Special Olympics.
- The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) held a public hearing and worksession on October 23, 2024, on this matter. The HPC recommended 5-0 that the Planning Board: 1. List Timberlawn on the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*; 2. Recommend that the County Council designates the property in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

INFORMATION

Draft

An Amendment to the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Lead Planner

Serena Bolliger

Staff Contact

Serena.Bolliger@montgomeryplanning.org

301-495-1329

Date

May 22, 2025

Planning Division

Historic Preservation, Countywide Planning & Policy

Planning Board Information

MCPB

Item No. 8

May 22, 2025

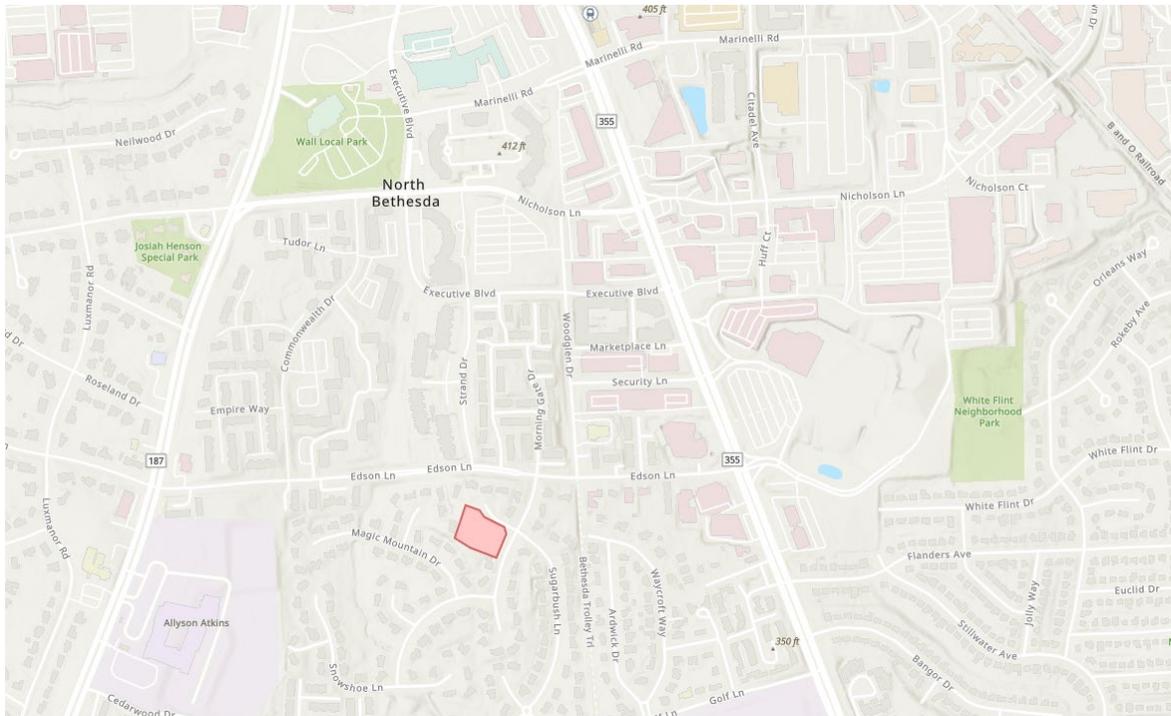


Figure 1: The red parcel indicates the entire property associated with 5700 Sugarbush Lane, Rockville, located to the south of Rockville and west of Rockville Pike.

OVERVIEW

In 1976, the Montgomery County Planning Board listed Timberlawn—then a large estate within a larger family landholding—to the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* based on its association with John Joy Edson and Sargent Shriver.¹ In 1990, as part of the *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Sector Plan*, the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) evaluated the property for designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.² The property owners objected to the designation of Timberlawn in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.³ The HPC voted unanimously to recommend that the house and its associated parcel be listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, as it satisfied four designation criteria as outlined in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code. This recommendation was based on the property’s association with development patterns along Rockville Pike, the lives of John Joy Edson and Sargent Shriver, and the architectural significance of the house (excluding its then unknown association with master architect Arthur B. Heaton). The Planning Board, however, disagreed with the HPC and recommended that the plan remove the property from the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*. The Council affirmed the Planning Board’s recommendation in the *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Sector Plan (1992)*.

In 2022, the current owner requested that Montgomery Planning reevaluate the property for listing in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* based on its association with Eunice Shriver and the Special Olympics. In this instance, staff agreed to reassess the property as the previous evaluation failed to consider the significance of this context at the local, state, and national levels. During our research efforts, staff reexamined the architectural significance of the house after documenting it as the work of Arthur B. Heaton, a recognized master architect.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) held a public hearing and worksession on October 23, 2024, on this matter. The HPC recommended 5-0 that the Planning Board: 1. List Timberlawn on the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*; 2. Recommend that the County Council designates the property in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

¹ Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, #30-11, May 14, 1975.

² North Bethesda Garrett Park Sector Plan, 1992, p. 192 and 211. <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NorthBethesda-GarrettParkMasterPlan1992ocr300.pdf>

³ Historic Preservation Commission Minutes, June 26, 1990, Montgomery Planning.

MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE

Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites

In 1976, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) created the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*, which identifies resources that are potentially historic in Montgomery County. Resources listed on the Atlas are protected from demolition or “substantial alteration” under Chapter 24A of the County Code. Timberlawn was listed on the original *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* for its architecture and association with Sargent Shriver and John Joy Edson.

Master Plan for Historic Preservation

The *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* was approved and adopted by the District Council in 1979 as a Functional Plan Amendment to the *General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District* (1964). The Master Plan created a framework for evaluating and prioritizing the designation of historic sites and districts, described and promoted financial incentives at the Federal, State, and local level for historic building preservation, and described important historical and cultural themes that should be explored as part of future master plan amendments. It should be noted that the Master Plan was organized differently than our more current planning documents. The direction given is discussed in broad terms making the Master Plan both an educational document about historic preservation planning practice in general and a roadmap for future policies and initiatives.

There are several relevant portions of the Master Plan that contain guidance about historic preservation philosophy and guiding statements that are applicable to this proposed plan amendment under consideration:

- Preservation provides economic benefits such as stabilizing and increasing property values along with cultural and aesthetic values. Preservation of older structures adds to the County's environmental continuity, and these structures convey a standard of livability [sic] by which new construction can be measured. Historic preservation provides a sense of continuity in time, of stability and durability, while familiar landmarks instill a loyalty to place and thus a commitment to the community and the County. (pg. 3)
- The record of the [Historic Preservation] Commission shall document that each site has real merit which warrants its protection as a valuable community resource. In addition to the proven inherent historic, architectural and cultural value of the historic resources, priority should be given to those offering other public benefits, such as enhancing neighborhoods and communities, meeting needs for housing, education, recreation, and being visible and accessible to the public. (pg. 3)
- The criteria do not set a date restriction on resources to be considered, and it is anticipated that as the Commission's work proceeds, more 20th century resources will be reviewed. Age alone does not qualify a resource for the strong protection offered by the proposed ordinance. (pg. 21)

- As a regular part of the master planning process, the Historic Preservation Commission should be asked to identify sites that should be added to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. (pg. 25)
- THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION: County historical resources owe much to the private owners who have planned, funded, and preserved or restored their own properties. The business community has also taken initiatives to preserve historic buildings with the realization that property values increase with the amenities offered by a sense of continuity with the past. An increasing number of businesses are also finding that there is a strong customer response to doing business in a preserved or restored historic building. Banks, professional offices, restaurants, and many other businesses are beginning to enjoy the comfort, the publicity and the profit of working in old buildings adapted to new uses. More incentives should be developed to encourage builders' and developers' cooperation in recycling older buildings. (pg. 27)

North Bethesda – Garrett Park Master Plan (1992)

The approved and adopted *North Bethesda – Garrett Park Master Plan (1992)* recorded the HPC recommendation that Timberlawn should be listed to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, but ultimately the plan recommended not listing it to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and deleting it from the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (Thrive)

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (2022), Montgomery County’s newly adopted General Plan, reaffirmed that historic preservation, as a component of the built environment, strongly influences community, culture, and overall quality of life. The “**DESIGN, ARTS & CULTURE: Investing and Building Community**” chapter of Thrive contains several elements supportive of historic preservation, historic building designation, and adaptive reuse.

These specific elements are as follows:

- Preserve, renew, and reuse existing and historic buildings, districts, and landscapes to affirm the continuity and evolution of communities while celebrating local culture and identity.
- Incentivize the reuse of historic buildings and existing structures to accommodate the evolution of communities, maintain building diversity, preserve naturally occurring affordable space, and retain embodied energy of structures.
- One of the metrics for evaluating success in improving and adapting the built environment will be the “Number and spatial distribution of cultural heritage and historic designations.”

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC) RECOMMENDATIONS

On October 23, 2024, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) held a duly advertised public hearing and work session. The HPC received testimony from the owner in support of the designation. At the conclusion of the public hearing and work session, the HPC recommended 5-0 that the Planning Board: 1. List Timberlawn on the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*; 2. Recommend that the County Council designates the property in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

Timberlawn includes the entire parcel at 5700 Sugarbush Lane, including the historic dwelling and non-historic garage. The parcel, west of Rockville Pike and east of Old Georgetown Road, is indicated below in red. This parcel corresponds with the Environmental Setting as recommended by the HPC as part of the Master Plan Amendment and shown below in *Figure 2*.

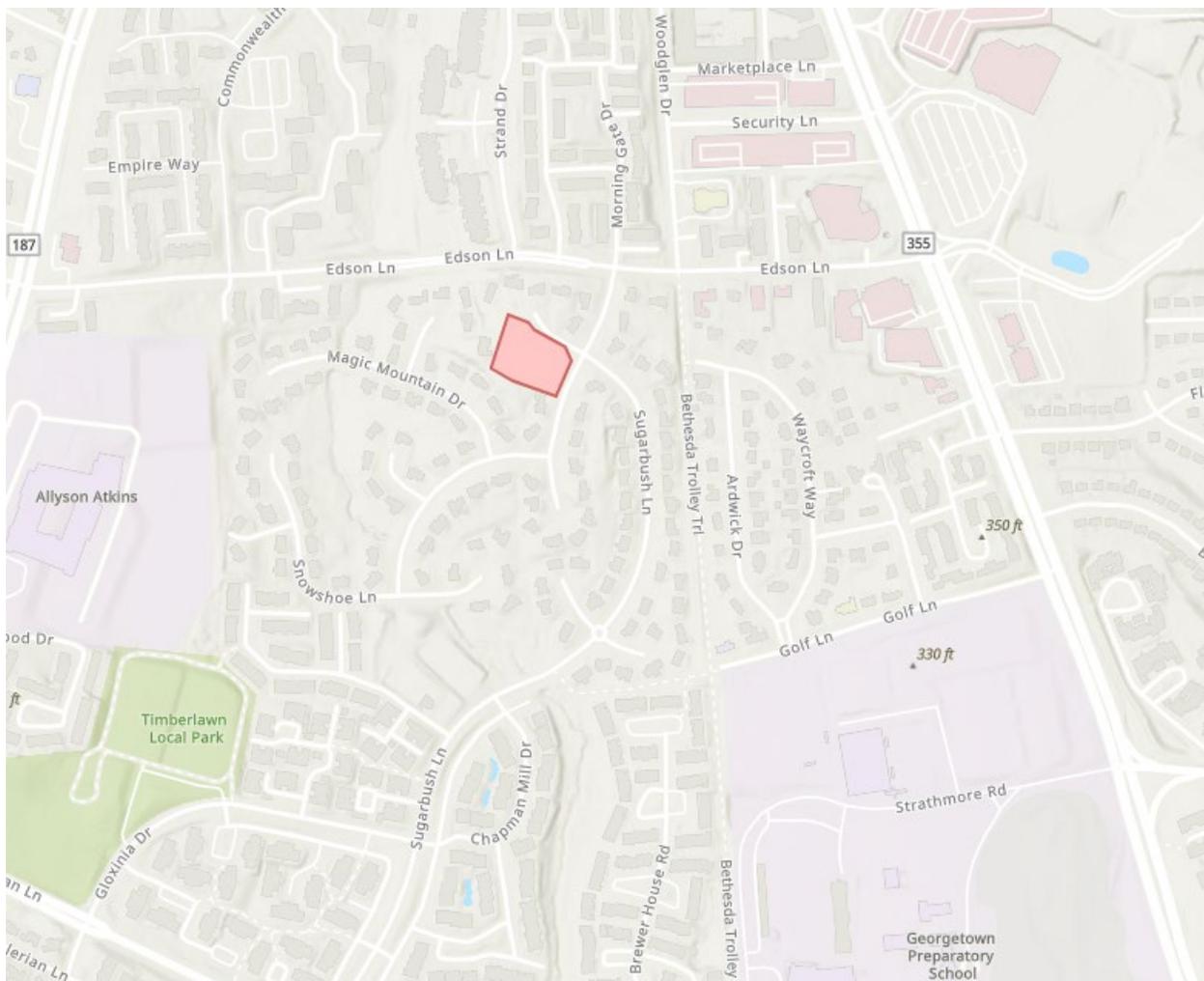


Figure 2: Proposed Environmental Setting for the Timberlawn Master Plan Historic Site.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA

Staff finds that The Timberlawn Historic Site meets Designation Criteria 1.B, 1.C, 2.A, and 2.B as listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code.

1.B Historical and cultural significance. The historic resource is the site of a significant historic event.

The Timberlawn home and surrounding parcel are the only extant portion of the approximately 280-acre estate where Eunice Kennedy Shriver developed Camp Shriver in 1962. This summer camp for children with intellectual disabilities inspired and catalyzed the Special Olympics. As vice-president of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, and appointee to President Kennedy's Panel on Mental Retardation, Eunice Shriver propelled social and legislative change on a national level. In response to a local parent's frustration, she organized a week-long summer day camp for children with intellectual disabilities at Timberlawn from 1962-1967. She used this opportunity to craft a thoughtful program which provided opportunities for children of all abilities and could be replicated nationwide. She treated her home as an extension of her office and worked tirelessly to drive research and innovation, and introduce people of influence to her vision. Camp Shriver's success and visibility, paired with the research and funding that resulted from Shriver's unyielding advocacy and political intellect, germinated the idea that physical fitness was beneficial for the health of those with intellectual disabilities, and that athletic competition could provide structure, focus, and self-esteem. Timberlawn was the site of a seventeen-year arc of Eunice Shriver's advocacy. She hosted work meetings for disability experts as the Presidential Panel's consultant in the early 1960s, invited international dignitaries and celebrity athletes to explore the inspirational promise of Camp Shriver from 1962-1967, and from 1968 she hosted home fundraisers for the newly founded Special Olympics. In collaboration with Anne McGlone and the Chicago Park District, Shriver was able to springboard the idea of the camp into the first Special Olympics event in 1968.

Special Olympics has been credited with improving the lives of people with intellectual disabilities on a global scale. The day camp was also replicated nationally under the Camp Shriver name, providing local opportunities for children across America. Developed at a time when intellectual disabilities were highly stigmatized and the subject of very little funding or research, Camp Shriver, and later the Special Olympics, normalized disabilities in the United States and in countries across the world. The rapid expansion of Special Olympics revolutionized treatment and caregiving behaviors in the disability community and created previously unseen opportunities for children and adults.

1.C Historical and cultural significance. The historic resource is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society.

Eunice and Sargent Shriver lived in this home from 1961-1978 while working on causes that had national and international impacts. In her book *The Kennedy That Changed The World*, Eileen McNamara called Eunice Shriver "one of the great architects of a major civil rights movement in the United States in the second half of the 20th century, the fight for disability rights." She was vice-president of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation and pushed the organization to the vanguard of intellectual disability research and programming. A political appointee to President Kennedy's

Taskforce on Mental Retardation, she unrelentingly championed funding and legislation supporting those with intellectual disabilities. Eunice Shriver developed and launched Camp Shriver in this home, and subsequently co-founded the Special Olympics, in which millions of children and adults have participated. While living in Timberlawn, Eunice Shriver drove the creation of pioneering legislation enshrining rights for adults and children with intellectual disabilities including the Maternal and Child Health and Mental Retardation Planning Amendments of 1963, the Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act of 1963, the Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Amendments of 1970 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975. Sargent Shriver spearheaded the development and dissemination of the Peace Corps, was Special Advisor to President Lyndon B. Johnson, and appointee to Johnson's Office of Special Economic Opportunities. He championed social programs including Head Start, Legal Services Corporation, Upward Bound, Job Corps, Community Action, and Foster Grandparents. He served as Ambassador to France in 1970, president of Special Olympics in 1984, and chairman of the Special Olympics board from 1990.

2A. Architectural and design significance. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.

Timberlawn embodies the distinctive characteristics of a Georgian Revival-influenced country estate with Shingle Style elements built at the turn on the twentieth century. During this period, architects utilized the basic tenets of Colonial-era Georgian architecture to foster a sense of nostalgia and prestige while introducing new design elements and building forms. Arthur B. Heaton, the architect of Timberlawn, recognized that the greatest attribute of the property rested in its picturesque landscape of farmland, rolling hills, streams, and woods. His location of the house near the apex of the property created a panoramic viewshed suitable for the property owners' social events. Heaton designed a restrained façade (north elevation)—largely obscured from Edson Lane—with elements of Georgian Revival architecture, but created a more elaborate, higher-styled, rear (south) elevation to showcase the coveted landscape. This elevation showcases the symmetrically balanced, side-gable house with flanking gable projections. The stucco siding on the first story and wood shingle siding on the second story separated by a belt course, ventilated wood cornice with modillions, decorative soffits with diamond patterns, multi-light and nine-over-one windows with operable shutters, gable dormers, and prominent brick chimneys all reflect the ideals of Georgian Revival architecture as manipulated by a master architect. The house continues to reflect the design envisioned by Heaton and showcased in media (political propaganda, news reports, etc.) throughout the residency of the Shriver family.

2.B Architectural and design significance. The historic resource represents the work of a master.

This dwelling is a remarkably intact example of the early and mid-career work of master architect Arthur Berthrong Heaton. In 1900, philanthropists John Joy Edson and Elizabeth Bethrong Edson hired their nephew Arthur Heaton to design the Georgian Revival-styled country home on their newly purchased estate. Heaton was a master architect who designed thousands of homes, commercial buildings, and civic institutions in and around Washington, D.C. from 1898-1951. This home was one of the first thirty projects in his career and is one of his earliest single-family homes. The success of this

design is evident in the repeated details in some of his later commissions, such as the Charles Ogilby house in Chevy Chase (1911), with its shingled siding, bay windows, roof dormers, and deep, covered porch at the rear of the property. Heaton's 1930 renovation of the 1901 Edson home for new owner Karl Corby, almost 30 years after his initial design, demonstrates how Heaton's style evolved, featuring more ornate interior and exterior finishes, such as the wood paneling in the living room and the date stone in the gable end, but remained complementary to his original style.

RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPACT STATEMENT

On November 19, 2019, the County Council for Montgomery County enacted Bill 27-19, an act to establish a racial equity and social justice program. Section 33A-14 "Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Racial Equity and Social Justice" of Bill 27-19 states that the "As part of the factors and conditions outlined in [§7-108] Section 21-204 of the Regional District Act and [§ 1.01 and § 1.03 of Article 66B,] Section 1-201 of the Land Use Article of the Maryland Code in preparing the Plan, the Planning Board must: consider the impact of the plan on racial equity and social justice in the County..."

Staff finds that the designation promotes racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County based on the following reasons. The designation of this home would recognize the importance of the history of disability rights and represent a turning point in the social justice journey of people with intellectual disabilities. This home represents a place where, in a time of segregation, children of all races were welcome to play and grow surrounded by respect and support. This story also follows some moments in the history of the opportunities for, and conditions of, incarcerated people. This significant story was overlooked when the house was initially considered for designation based on its association with John Joy Edson and Sargent Shriver. Recognizing the house for its association with Eunice Kennedy Shriver would underscore the importance of women's contributions to civil rights, and highlight our past failure to acknowledge the endeavors of women in the historic narrative.

Throughout its history, Timberlawn has been associated with philanthropy and advocacy directed toward providing equity and opportunity for all. The home's builder and first owner John Joy Edson co-founded the Equitable Cooperative Building Association to provide prospective homebuyers of lower means with opportunities to save money and access better loan rates. He held roles on the boards of countless organizations, including treasurer of the Washington Sanitary Improvement Company, director and treasurer of the U.S Chamber of Commerce, treasurer of the Welfare Board of the District of Columbia, president of the District's Board of Charities, treasurer of the American Red Cross, treasurer of the Women's National Health Association of Ireland and president of the John Dickson Home for the Aged. A progressive champion for social justice, he sponsored the 1913 women's suffrage parade in New York City, visited over seventy prisons in his lifetime advocating for prison reform, and volunteered as treasurer for the building campaign of the Washington, D.C. Rosenwald Y.M.C.A. for Black men.

Timberlawn's second owners, Karl and Mary Corby, opened the home to the public to raise funds and attention for charitable causes. They hosted an annual horse show and race raised funds for "The Washington Home for Incurables," a charity which provided housing and medical care for chronically ill poor people in Washington, D.C.

The Corby family rented Timberlawn to Sargent and Eunice Shriver in 1961, who dedicated their lives to civil service and social justice. Eunice Shriver had advocated for many at-risk groups during her life, including improving the conditions of the incarcerated and helping at-risk women in shelters. However, her great passion was for improving the opportunities for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Shriver's eldest sister, Rosemary Kennedy, was born with an intellectual disability and Eunice had seen firsthand how little understanding and few opportunities there were for her sister. As vice president of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation, she focused the organization's mission toward advancing research, improving medical treatment, and ending social stigma for people with intellectual disabilities. When her brother, John F. Kennedy, was elected President, she worked with his transition task force to establish intellectual disability rights and children's health as foci for his presidency. Upon his inauguration in 1961, President Kennedy appointed Eunice Shriver as the consultant to the President's Panel on Mental Retardation, and she worked tirelessly to drive the work of the panel. In 1962, the panel issued detailed guidelines for federal special education programs, research initiatives, and increased funding allocations for education, personnel training, and residential care for people with intellectual disabilities. The next day President Kennedy signed legislation establishing the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) within the National Institutes of Health, emphasizing research into developmental disorders, including intellectual disabilities. Through her work during John F. Kennedy's presidency, Eunice Shriver drove the creation of pioneering legislation enshrining rights for adults and children with intellectual disabilities including the Maternal and Child Health and Mental Retardation Planning Amendments of 1963, the Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act of 1963. These milestone acts allocated substantial federal aid for programming to support children and adults with intellectual disabilities for the first time in American history.

In 1962, Eunice Shriver had begun hosting an annual, week-long day camp at Timberlawn for children with intellectual disabilities who had no other access to traditional summer camps. Camp Shriver, developed for intellectually disabled children already neglected by mainstream social services, was open to children of all races, a deliberate choice by Eunice Shriver, who routinely made efforts to combat the de facto segregation prevalent throughout the country. Shriver wanted to expose the children and staff to people from all walks of society, and built upon her work in the criminal justice system by bussing volunteers from nearby prisons to support the camp counselors and build skills for the future.

Inspired by Camp Shriver, Shriver built upon an event developed by the Chicago Park District, and with the Kennedy Foundation hosted an Olympics-style track meet in Chicago in 1968. At the event she announced the creation of the Special Olympics, which has been credited with providing athletic and social opportunities to millions of people with intellectual disabilities, and shifting the social stigma associated with intellectual disabilities on a global scale.

The creation of Camp Shriver, John F. Kennedy's revolutionary 1963 legislation, and the foundation of the Special Olympics were momentous turning points in the opportunities, living conditions, and human rights of people with intellectual disabilities in the United States and worldwide. A community

historically neglected by both the social and legal system, the rights, benefits, and opportunities now available to children and adults with intellectual disabilities can be traced directly to Eunice Kennedy Shriver's work while living in this home.

CONCLUSION

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that Timberlawn meet the requisite criteria listed as listed in 24A-3 of the County Code. Additionally, staff finds that designating the property with the environmental setting as detailed in the Public Hearing Draft Plan is consistent with master plan guidance and in the benefit of the public interest.

Staff recommends that the Planning Board:

1. Find that the subject property satisfies the designation criteria listed in §24A-3 of the County Code;
2. List Timberlawn with the associated environmental setting as recommended by the HPC on the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*;
3. Recommend that the County Council designates the property with the associated environmental setting as recommended by the HPC in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

ATTACHMENTS

1. *Public Hearing Draft Plan for Timberlawn: An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation*
2. *Appendix – Timberlawn Master Plan Historic Site Designation Form*
3. *Written testimony received by the Historic Preservation Commission for the Timberlawn public hearing.*