

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

Bethesda neighborhood on its way to national recognition

Carderock Springs may soon be added to the National Register of Historic Places

by Bradford Pearson | Staff Writer

[E-mail this article](#) | [Print this article](#)

A Bethesda neighborhood may soon be added to the National Register of Historic Places, concluding a four-year process that has included University of Maryland professors, community members, the county executive and the Maryland Historical Trust.

More News

- **Gourmet cooking for food stamp budgets**
- **Council hits home run with baseball art project**
- **How teachers spend their summer vacations**
- **Sandlot greets return to the field**
- **From mother's garage to operating out of warehouses**



Find out where to be and what to see.

Search right this second
Gazette.Net

In the 1960s, Bethesda's Carderock Springs neighborhood was lauded with national attention in the architecture world because of its contemporary design and incorporation of homes into the natural landscape.

It is now in the final stages of completing the approval process for being named to the National Parks Services' Register of Historic Places.

"We're beginning to understand and appreciate the more recent past as having architectural significance," said Peter Kurtze, an administrator at the Maryland Historical Trust. "There's something we can learn from this neighborhood."

Carderock Springs sits between River Road and MacArthur Boulevard, and has entrances off both Persimmon Tree and Seven Locks roads. Nearly 400 homes in the neighborhood were built by Edmund Bennett, who incorporated a clean, open design into the homes, much in the style of contemporary houses on the West Coast.

Many have four or five bedrooms — built for larger families — and the roads in the community are designed to house three or four homes on small cul-de-sacs.

The Trust commissioned a study, completed in 2004, that surveyed modern architecture in Maryland. The study, done by University of Maryland professors and graduate students, determined that Carderock Springs was worthy of commemoration, or at least recognition.

Neighbors agree.

"Well I think it's important because it gives the community a little bit of pizzazz," said Sandy Dembski, who has been spearheading the designation for the neighborhood along with other residents.

While the designation doesn't put any restrictions on what homeowners can do to their property, Dembski said she hopes residents will realize how special their homes are.

"I think some of us are thinking that people will say, 'Hey if we're on the National Register we have something worth preserving voluntarily,'" she said.

Get weekly news alerts from The Gazette.



Each week we will send our weekly headlines and a look at our weekend picks right to your inbox.

It's free and signing up is easy!

[SIGN UP NOW >>](#)

FEATURED JOBS

DENTAL RECEPTIONIST/ HYGIENE

individual [More](#)

Service Merchandisers Needed

for major sunglass brand in Rockville, Bethesda, Gaithersburg [More](#)

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT Leasing

Associate Seeking a Full-time Leasing Associate for the Gaithersburg [More](#)

TEACHER ASSISTANT Peppertree

Chidrens Center in Germ needs a Teachers Assistant for its 1 yr [More](#)

[See All Featured Ads](#)

Following the University of Maryland survey, Kurtze worked with the neighborhood to prepare an application to the Trust, which approved the neighborhood for designation in February 2007. This May the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission approved the site, and County Executive Isiah Leggett (D) recently sent the Trust a letter supporting the project, according to Clare Kelly, the research and designation coordinator for the county's Historic Preservation office.

"It's really a great example of the second wave of houses that were built in the area after World War II," Kelly said. "...The houses are really celebrating nature, and that really makes it a special neighborhood."

Kurtze said he hoped to complete the neighborhood's application by the end of the summer, and will be coming to the neighborhood soon to take updated photos of the homes for the application.

After sending it to the National Parks Service, the application process usually takes about 45 days, Kurtze said. He was optimistic about the neighborhood's chances.

"By the time we've worked on something for this many years, I wouldn't think there would be any problems," Kurtze said.

If approved, the neighborhood would join other county neighborhoods, including the Garrett Park and Kensington historic districts, on the historic register.