

**My name is Janice Brown. I am the historian for East Greenwich Township. Thank for you a few minutes of your time.**

**I'd like to comment on the proposed Estates at Mount Royal. The present proposal for that development will negatively impact the historic LANDSCAPE of the Death of the Fox Inn on King's Highway. This is how.**

Historic places are among our greatest treasures. These are the places that shape our communities, tell our stories, and keep our history alive. The Death of the Fox Inn, a *historic designation-eligible building* owned by Jim and Nancy Sery, **is one such treasure**. This building and the landscape surrounding it can be associated with significant historic people and events.

**How does landscape define a building?** Take a moment, if you will, to picture your current home transported to downtown Camden. Would your feeling about the house be the same? Would it have the same feeling or significance to others? How does the landscape define your home?

By drastically changing the physical attributes of the land surrounding a house -- building NEW houses so close that the Death of the Fox will seem out of place, rather than the other way around -- the historic integrity of this building WILL BE LOST FOREVER--not just for a while--FOREVER!

**When a historic house is encroached upon by newer houses**, the long-term loss accrues to **each of us as part of this community**. As our township begins to lose its distinctiveness *created by its historic heritage*, the entire township should expect to decline. This historic heritage does not belong to just the Sery's—it belongs to all of us who live here.

When someone asks you to **describe** East Greenwich, how do you answer them?

- Do you say: “new housing developments.”
- Or do you say: “A charming town with a tree-lined main street and lovely historic homes.”

**Whether you were born here, or you adopted this township, landmarks such as Death of the Fox define the very fabric of our community.**

Through primary documents, The Death of the Fox Inn's historic significance has been verified. I will only mention a few of the highlights, as I have a handout to provide to the planning board with details:

- The house is 277 years old, and is one of a very few remaining physical connections between our nation's history and residents of East Greenwich.
- The Gloucester Fox Hunting Club often ended the chase at this inn. **Members of that club who frequented the Death of the Fox and its landscape include:**
  - **Jonas Cattell**, the spotter for this club (Jonas warned the soldiers of Fort Mercer at our famous battle of Red Bank that over 1200 Hessian soldiers were approaching to take over the fort); winning that battle was a much needed morale booster for American patriots.

- **Samuel Nicholas**, the first president of that Club, was named the first officer of the **U.S. Marines**;
  - **Jeffrey Clark** who once owned the house --the area of Clarksboro is named for him
  - **Dr. Bodo Otto, Jr.**, Colonel in George Washington's army, and stationed with him at Valley Forge in 1778 during the "Winter of Suffering." Dr. Bodo Otto, Jr. died in this house, after his own home, located just down the road in Mickleton, was burned by the British.
  - **Daniel Coleman** who frequented the tavern, went on to become Secretary of State (of NJ) in 1810.
- Taverns during the 1700's were not just drinking places--patriots gathered here to transact business and to forge what became the future of not only East Greenwich, but also our nation. Not all significant events happened across the Delaware River in Philadelphia. **HISTORY WAS MADE HERE!** More battles were fought during the American Revolution on New Jersey land than any other colony!

Despite our unique history and accomplishments, residents of other states look upon New Jersey as the land of traffic jams and toxic pollution--and as a place where its residents continue to commit "historic suicide" by allowing their historic homes and landscapes to be destroyed. ***We have a chance now to prove them wrong.***

*I find it intriguing that Beazer Homes, the developer of The Estates at Mount Royal, often uses the term **historic** as a selling tool to promote sales of its homes. Case in point, taken from their own web sites:*

#### **The Enclave at Grant Park Townhomes in Atlanta, Georgia**

"located in the heart of **historic** Grant Park! "

#### **Laurel Glen... located in Springboro, Ohio.**

Surrounded by lake views, strolling paths, and **historic** Warren County beauty.

#### **Creekside Village**

"located in **historic** Berea, Kentucky...Berea is where *Small Town Charm meets a Rich Culture.*"

#### **Providence at McKay's Mill**

"Beautiful community in **historic** Franklin TN with Old World charm."

"**Historical** Lebanon, Ohio is host to peaceful **Sterling Chase North**"

#### **And one much closer to home in Swedesboro, New Jersey: High Hill Estates**

To quote, Terry Karschnick, vice president of sales and marketing for Beazer Homes in their promotion of that development: "The location of this community is so refreshing. Its almost hard to imagine such a rural area in New Jersey...Its like a breath of fresh air being out here, yet

the community is so convenient to so many things... It is located near many beautiful lakes, streams and **historic sites...**”

**By their own published admission**, it is the presence of historic sites, such as *Death of the Fox* that INDEED draw new residents to townships, and help Beazer Homes to sell their new houses. I am at a loss to know, **why then do they wish to destroy the historic landscape of Death of the Fox** that would inherently promote their future sales?

Wise stewardship protects the character, and or spirit of a place by **recognizing history** and making **respectful** changes. The potential benefits from the preservation of historic landscapes are enormous. THESE landscapes **help us understand ourselves** as individuals, communities and as a nation. Their ongoing preservation can yield an improved quality of life for all, and, above all, **a sense of place or identity** for future generations—while at the same time increasing property values for all of us.

*We can*, **as a community** meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future.

Personally I am not angry with the people at Beazer Homes... **yet**. Many are hopeful they will voluntarily be pro-active to preserve the historic fabric of our community, not destroy it. By preserving the landscape of the Death of the Fox Inn, Beazer Homes could potentially gain the trust and gratitude not only of myself, but other residents, and many others outside of our township who have voiced support for its preservation. By preserving the landscape of the Death of the Fox, Beazer Homes would demonstrate their willingness to partner with us, as STEWARDS to insure ***that the historic charm that they themselves promote, will continue to do so for generations of residents yet to be born.***

**In the event that Beazer Homes chooses not to join us in STEWARDSHIP of the historic Death of the Fox Inn, I urge all residents here tonight to attend the March 25<sup>th</sup> Master Plan meeting at 7 pm in this building, to speak up and support the historic component of that plan, and to press our township committee to enact ordinances reflecting same.**

**Thank you again for your time.**