



April 18, 2008

Deputy Commissioner Jacquelyn Cornish  
Housing and Community Development  
417 E. Fayette Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: Proposal for 7 S. Durham Street — Block 1735, Lot 068

Dear Deputy Commissioner Cornish:

Unit South Durham Homestead Houses, Inc. (“USD”) seeks to purchase the above-referenced lot in order to continue to maintain the urban greenspace with adjacent residential parking. USD expects to pay the nominal price of \$1.00. The members of the nonprofit, owners of the 8 houses facing the park, have maintained it since 1976 under an informal agreement with the City. Here is a brief history:

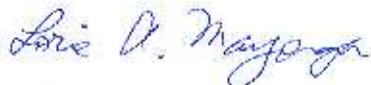
Beginning in 1975, the unit block of S. Durham Street was “homesteaded” with the assistance of then-Councilwoman Barbara Mikulski. All 8 houses on the block were included in the “dollar house” urban renewal program.

- A pocket park and 8 parking spaces were established at Ward 2, Section 3, Block 1735, Lot 068, known as 7 S. Durham Street.
- Housing and Community Development (HCD) retained ownership of the park.
- Homeowners were allotted one parking space per home, directly in front of each homeowner’s property.
- Homeowners agreed to maintain the pocket park and surroundings. 2 original homesteaders still live on the block today and subsequent homeowners and residents have kept their commitment to the City to maintain and care for the pocket park.
- Examples: In addition to regularly sweeping brick walkways, clearing trash, mowing grass, and trimming trees and shrubs, the homeowners have:
  - Purchased and planted replacement trees
  - Improved flowerbeds with low stone retaining walls
  - Added flowering shrubs and seasonal plantings to flowerbeds



The homeowners formed USD for the purpose of buying 7 South Durham Street in order to protect the property from future development and maintain the unique character of this model alley. Should the property cease to be used as a greenspace, USD's state charter and federal nonprofit status require that ownership revert to Baltimore City.

Sincerely,



Lorie A. Mayorga  
President

cc: Charles L. Smith (11<sup>th</sup> Fl.)  
Councilman Jim Kraft

