

Evaluation

The proposed boundaries meet the Board's stated goals of retaining a representative grouping of buildings in an authentic setting that can serve as a meaningful commemorative site. Located at the northwest end of the larger site, the retained cluster of buildings, their courtyards, their surrounding landscape, and their relationship to Stevens Road would remain clearly visible to residents and the broader public from within the new community and from outside. The cluster is situated at a natural entrance to Barry Farm from Firth Stirling Avenue. It illustrates the original plan of rows of duplexes arranged in similar layouts around common courts and open spaces, with some units fronting onto neighborhood streets. It includes a section of Stevens Road and an unusually spacious landscaped court with two majestic heritage trees which make it distinctive among the remaining clusters. The grouping can also be successfully incorporated into the site's redevelopment plan, as presented to HPRB.

While the proposed boundaries achieve the goals stated above from an architectural and planning perspective, the buildings are perhaps more notable for their associations with significant persons, and the stories they tell about the community of Barry Farm. The landmark application highlighted many residents who played important civic roles in the community, including Barry Farm residents who were plaintiffs in *Bolling v. Sharpe*, the D.C. companion school desegregation case to *Brown v. Board of Education*, and later civic activists. In looking at the residences of those persons named in the application, some of the most notable lived in the buildings forming the 1100 block of Stevens Road.

Beginning in the 1940s, Barry Farm parents were among those mobilizing to demand better educational opportunities for their children. When Sousa Junior High opened in 1950 for white students only, the Consolidated Parents Group sought and was denied admission for a group of eleven students, leading to the *Bolling* case, argued before the Supreme Court in 1952 and decided in 1954. Most of the students lived at Barry Farm (Spottswood and Wanamaker Bolling, Sarah Louise Briscoe, Valerie Cogdell, Wallace Morris, and Adrienne and Barbara Jennings), and two of them lived in the 1100 block of Stevens Road. They were the Jennings family, including Navy Yard employee James C. Jennings and his wife Luberta Jennings, who lived with their children Adrienne and Barbara at 1139 Stevens Road.¹ The Evening Star celebrated the *Brown v. Board* decision with a photograph of the Jennings sisters reading the frontpage headline, "High Court Voids School Segregation; Upsets 'Separate but Equal' Doctrine.

Barry Farm residents also played an important role in the city's history during the 1960s, and two of the most significant lived in the cluster proposed for designation. Etta Mae Horn (1123 Stevens Road) and Lillian Wright (1103 Stevens Road) organized the Band of Angels—a tenants' council that emerged out of President Johnson's effort to give voice to the poor in his War on Poverty program. In its first victory at Barry Farm, the Band of Angels was responsible for securing a \$1.5 million renovation of the property. The Band of Angels would eventually form the nucleus of the Citywide Welfare Alliance (CWA) which consisted of 12 groups from across the city, while Etta Mae Horn would herself help found and pursue the goals of the National Welfare Rights Organization, which fought to protect the rights of welfare recipients nationwide.

¹ None of the other *Bolling* plaintiffs lived in the area of the filed landmark nomination. Valerie Cogdell lived at 1269 Stevens Road, but she was a plaintiff in a different case that did not proceed.

Although many other residents of Barry Farm contributed to the community and its history, the adjacency of the homes of Etta Mae Horn, Lillian Wright and the Jennings sisters offer a ready opportunity to commemorate and educate the public about the seminal events and activities that made Barry Farm such a strong community that still resonates today.

The proposed boundaries meet D.C. Designation Criteria A (Events) and B (History) the property's associations with the historical periods, social movements, patterns of growth, and achievements of the city's African American community. From the post-Civil War settlement of newly freed slaves at Barry Farm to World War II public housing for African Americans involved in the war effort, the property has been a home and community to African Americans when there were limited other housing options available to blacks due to discriminatory housing practices. Further, Barry Farm has been a hotbed of civic activism with many of the residents playing lead and critical roles in civil rights efforts, including being plaintiffs in the *Bolling v. Sharpe*, companion case to the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*. For the above reasons, the property also meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A.

HPO recommends that the applicants and others work with HPO to prepare a revised nomination with a new statement of significance for submission to the National Register. That statement should recognize that as a fragment of the larger Barry Farm, the recommended cluster still appropriately illustrates the historic and cultural importance of Barry Farm and its associations with African American Civil Rights. The test of integrity would be applied to the property under that context, rather than under the context of public housing.

Boundaries

The proposed boundaries include four rows of eight buildings (32 units) on the southwest side of Stevens Road, including 1101-1115 Stevens Road (lot 133), 1117-1131 Stevens Road (lot 134), 1133-1147 Stevens Road (lot 135), and 1149-1163 Stevens Road (lot 136), all in Square 5866. The boundary would include the section of Stevens Road to which the buildings are oriented, the courtyard between 1101-1115 and 1117-1131, and the alley running behind 1117-1131 and 1149-1163.

Integrity

As discussed in previous report to the Board, a retained remnant may merit designation if it sufficiently represents the most important aspects of a whole that is architecturally, culturally or socially significant. In this case, the surviving buildings would retain their original location and layout, a significant philosophical and planning element of public housing from the 1930s and 1940s. The rows of simple duplex forms arranged in a series of repetitive patterns with courts and opens spaces providing ample light and air were key design elements in public housing and are still clearly apparent in the buildings along Stevens Road, retaining their location, orientation, relationships and many aspects of setting. While the buildings were altered significantly in the 1980s and are in poor to deteriorated condition, rehabilitation and restoration to their original appearance, contemporaneous with the time period of the significant residents, would help to convey their historic and commemorative significance. As was encouraged by the Board's December motion, a preservation plan should be developed as part of the larger site's redevelopment that includes removing the applied stucco finishes and the gabled roofs on the end units, restores missing porches, and replicates original windows and doors.

BARRY FARM DWELLINGS LANDMARK BOUNDARY

