

Finding Common Ground

An Open Letter to the Bellevue Ochre Point Neighborhood Association

As the City of Newport's Zoning Board considers The Preservation Society of Newport County's application for a special use permit at The Breakers, we'd like to make a proposal to the Bellevue Ochre Point Neighborhood Association (BOPNA):

Let's work together with the Zoning Board to craft a permit that preserves both the character of our community and the success of our businesses and institutions.

We share the Association's commitment to protecting Newport's unique residential areas, where for decades the historic house museums we operate have welcomed visitors in harmony with private homes and quiet neighborhoods.

It's taken a delicate balance to make it all work, and the presence of these magnificent homes and gardens has helped sustain Newport's attractiveness as not only a great place to live, but also a vibrant international destination.

The special use permit we seek creates the opportunity to ensure that Newport's balance of community and commercial concerns is sustained. We respect the need to define the limits and standards of food service within residential districts, and

together we can make sure that museum visitor conveniences never threaten the success of restaurants operating in our city's commercial districts.

We are not proposing a restaurant. We are proposing light refreshments – a basic, expected visitor amenity in museums around the world. We've offered limited fare for many years at The Elms and Marble House with zero negative impact on our neighbors. But we respect the special sensitivities of our museum locations within residential areas.

That's why, for example, The Breakers welcome center as we propose it will have no kitchen, no dishwasher, no microwave oven. Only sandwiches and salads prepared off-site by local caterers will be provided. And we believe even this minimal level of food service should be restricted to sites with annual admissions of at least 100,000.

As we have offered in the past, we remain open to BOPNA's suggestions. Getting the details right together, we can assure that the delicate balance that makes Newport special for residents and visitors is preserved. So let's use the special use permitting process to come together on common ground.

That's the future we're all hoping for.



THE
PRESERVATION SOCIETY
OF NEWPORT COUNTY