

Primary Source: Feasibility Study of the Hebrew Home for the Aged (1964)

Quote of Note:

“Reports on delinquency rates in the area obtained by the Health and Welfare Council do not support the charge that its delinquency rates are materially higher than those of the rest of the city.... Whether or not there is actual danger to staff, visitors, and volunteers from the location of the Home on this site, it is clear that there exists the fear that this is in fact so.”

Background:

White flight took place in cities across the country in the early and mid 20th century. It was a trend of white and affluent populations leaving urban centers pushed by desegregated schools and pulled by new housing availability. Much of DC's Jewish population were a part of this trend. In 1964, the Hebrew Home for the Aged—then located in Petworth—was overcrowded with no relief in sight. The Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds conducted a study to determine the future of the Home. They recommended a move out of the city and into Montgomery County and documented their research and reasons in this report.

Themes: suburbanization, community organizations, white flight

- Questions:**
1. What perspectives are represented in this report? Residents of the Home? Families? Staff? What perspectives go unrepresented?
 2. Assess the reasons why the report recommended a move to Montgomery County. Do you agree with the recommendation?

9.

1) The center of Jewish population has moved away from this location and is doing so at an increasing rate. All the reports of the leadership of the community, as well as the trends reflected in the Bigman Study of 1956, show that the movement of population is to the suburbs, particularly Montgomery and Prince George Counties in Maryland, and Arlington and Fairfax Counties in Virginia.

2) The acreage available is inadequate to provide both building space and outdoor spaces, parking area, and room for possible later expansion and for other programs.

During the course of the interviews conducted by the Surveyor with leaders of the community, there was frequent reference to the possibility that other Jewish agencies could also benefit by a move to a location near one of the centers of Jewish population. The Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Social Service Agency, and a possible future Jewish hospital, were all mentioned as agencies which it would be desirable to have located on the same grounds as or next to the Jewish Home for the Aged. If this desire is considered valid for one or more of these agencies, then adequate acreage for them would be needed and that acreage is lacking on the present site.

As to whether Criteria Numbers 3 through 8 are satisfied needs to be assessed in the light of the character of the neighborhood on Spring Road itself.

This is now a middle class Negro-occupied area of Washington. The houses in this neighborhood are fifty or more years old, and while they seem to be in fair condition, the neighborhood is not an improving one; on the contrary, it is likely to become a deteriorating one in the future as its structures become obsolescent and decay with time.

Item Information

Gift of the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington. Capital Jewish Museum Collections.

Object ID: 2014.30.01

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Full Text

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As to whether Criterias Number 3 through 8 are satisfied needs to be assessed in light of the character of the neighborhood on Spring Road itself.

This is a middle-class Negro occupied area of Washington. The houses in this neighborhood are 50 or more years old, and while they seem to be in fair condition, the neighborhood is not an improving one; on the contrary, it is likely to become a deteriorating one in the future as its structures become obsolescent and decay with time.

Education programs at the Museum are made possible, in part, by Sue Ducat in memory of Stanley Cohen, z"l, The Alper Education Fund, The Bresler Family Education Fund, The Michael Goldstein Education Fund, The Doris & Robert I. Silverman Endowment, and The Morse-Loeb Fund.