

# Board protects New Deal-era apartments

## Falkland Chase Apartments

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**Washington, D.C.** ([Map](#), [News](#)) - **Montgomery** affordable-housing advocates are opposing a planning board decision to stop developers from altering a **Silver Spring** apartment complex hailed as a icon of the New Deal era, saying the complex would better serve as a legacy to that time if it provided more places to live for working-class families.

The **Montgomery County** Planning Board ruled late Thursday that the 450-unit Falkland Chase Apartments on Silver Spring's 16th Street should be considered eligible for historic designation, meaning developers who sought to rebuild one of the property's three parcels would not be able to do so.

Builder Home Properties had pledged that of the 877 new units that would have been built, 282 would be moderately priced. But preservationists said the property, where first lady **Eleanor Roosevelt** cut the ribbon at it's dedication in 1937, was too important to be altered.

"Usually when you find a historic property it's important because it has some nice architectural features, or because it was designed by an important architect, or because something important happened there," historian **David S. Rotenstein** told The Examiner. "In this case, you have all of these things combined in a single historic property."

But members of Action in Montgomery, an interfaith organization that lobbies for increased affordable housing in the county, told board members they felt it was ironic to deny construction of new affordable housing in order to preserve a building as testament to one of the first examples of moderately-priced housing complexes.

"We need another New Deal so our families can live near each other, so our corps of county employees can forego commuting long distances and be close to the people they serve," **Rebecca Brillhart**, Associate Pastor of Sligo Adventist Church and Action in Montgomery member, said.

The plans for the redesigned Falklands-Chase included a total of 1,059 units. Developers wanted to tear down 182 of the existing 450 units to build the 877 new residences. Of those, 182 were to be moderately priced and 100 were to have been for workers in less-affluent professions like public service and teaching.

Of the existing apartments that were to be torn ddown, 36 are under some form of price control, with all such restraints set to expire in seven years.

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