Hyman Myers, FAIA, Preservation Consulting

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July 28, 2011

Mr. Samuel Stretton, Attorney at Law 301 S High Street P.O. Box 3231 West Chester, PA 19381

Re: Statement of Hy Myers on the Historical Significance of the Barnes and Ker Feal

Dear Mr. Stretton:

The Barnes Foundation complex in Merion has been deemed eligible for consideration as a "National Historic Landmark". This category is the highest honor given in the United States to any historic property. This "eligibility" refers to the entire, interrelated complex in Merion, including the Barnes Gallery building designed by famous architect Paul Cret, the extraordinary, historic arboretum and gardens surrounding the building, as well as the exceptional art collection for which the building was purposefully designed.

This honor has been attained by only 2500 sites nationwide, which "form a common bond between all Americans." Other sites attaining this high honor include:

- in Washington, DC; the National Capitol, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution Building (the Castle), the Supreme Court Building, and the White House
- in Philadelphia; Christ Church, Elfreth's Alley, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
- in New York City; Central Park, the Empire State Building, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Stock Exchange

It is of note that in testimony to the Court, emphasis was placed on the historical importance of Ker Feal, the summer residence of Albert and Laura Barnes in Chester County, PA, while no mention was made of the much greater historical significance of the Barnes Foundation complex in Merion. It is important to note that Ker Feal's historical significance depends on the Barnes Foundation in Merion, which was the life work of Dr. and Mrs. Barnes and the location of their educational programs.

Applications for National Register and National Historic Landmark status can be filed by any party but listing requires the agreement of the property owner. In the case of the Barnes, the owner is the Board of Trustees. The Barnes Board did receive National Register listing for Ker Feal in 2003 but did not even apply for the Barnes Foundation in Merion. Nonetheless, the Merion complex has been officially determined to be eligible for both National Register status since 1991 and National Historic Landmark status since 2007.

Separating the art collection from its historic context will destroy the integrity of the Barnes Foundation as a nationally significant, artistic and educational whole and eliminate funding opportunities from these historical designations. The Barnes Board is discarding the great potential of the complex and desecrating a national historic landmark treasure.

Sincerely,

Hyman Myers, FAIA
Preservation Architect