February 10, 1964

Dear Mrs. Mann,

The Plainfield Garden Club wishes to resubmit its landscape plan for Drake House Museum in applying for the Sears Roebuck grant of 1964 "New Jersey - Preservation of the Past."

Because the Historical Society and The Junior League of Plainfield have been working away on the inside of "Drake House, Plainfield's only museum" and because of our plan and small efforts to "do something" for the grounds around Drake House, "the seed has sprouted" and, praises be, the city Tercentenary Committee looked favorably upon our project and agreed to undertake all the work of the following paragraph. They are in the process of spending almost $5,000 donated to them by the city for paint, labor, bricks, and laying macadam on the driveway. It is most thrilling and heart warming.

You will notice that the plan has been redrawn with several changes; i.e. the driveway has been enlarged to permit parking and the mouth of the drive has been widened to allow cars to proceed in and out at the same time. Some "off center" planting behind the sign in the form of an American Hornbeam hedge has been added to hide the cars from the street. The walks are being changed from blue stone flag to brick and a new walk is added for convenient approach to the side street. The flag pole has been reset and is of a type that can be lowered for painting and repairs. The museum itself has received a coat of paint and looks very trim.
Along with this the Spade and Trowel Garden Club has put in a memorial planting (again according to our plan) of three white dogwood trees and 100 vinka plants.

But for the draught last fall, the Drake House landscape committee would have had the area for the gardens leveled and put in a random planting across the back line of white pines and hemlocks, with clumps of rhododendrons and laurel interspersed. This to be done at the first possible chance this spring. The next day we plan to begin laying out the brick paths of both the herb garden and the knot garden and to fertilize and seed the lawn.

Mrs. Harry Brokaw Smith will be in charge of planting the herb garden. Last year's grant was earmarked for leveling and laying out the brick paths. This year's grant, if we are lucky, will go toward the small hedge of holly which surrounds that garden.

With this tremendous boost, we feel at last that the ball is rolling and with luck, our goal will be reached.

Our goal? To have the grounds around Drake House a true demonstration of landscaping as it was in 1777, when Washington stood on the porch and directed his troops in the battle of the Short Hills.

Plainfield's part in the celebration of New Jersey's Tercentenary is to reenact this battle in June with the help of the Queen's Guard, an R.O.T.C. unit of Rutgers University.

Please help us to be ready.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara F. Handford
Plainfield Garden Club