



Exterior work at the Governor's Mansion is already drawing criticism from legislators and historical groups.

By J. Hansen — The Capital

# DUST STORM

## *Landscaping at Governor's Mansion under fire*

By LEDYARD KING  
Staff Writer

Bulldozers are replacing lawn mowers at the Governor's Mansion where a \$97,000 landscaping project has turned a lush yard and garden into a dirt pile.

The landscaping, which will entail rooting out weeds, replacing walkways and removing trees, means that more than \$510,000 will be spent on renovating the mansion.

The entire project is being supervised by Hilda Mae Snoops, the mansion's official hostess and companion to Gov. William Donald Schaefer.

The state legislature already has appropriated \$413,693 to buy new

interior furnishings and renovate the mansion.

Exterior work, which began Friday, already is drawing fire from legislators and historical groups who were unaware of the extensive project and said they saw little wrong with the mansion's gardens and lawns.

"Many of us take the mansion very personally. We don't want things done to the grounds that would destroy its natural beauty," said Del. John G. Gary, R-Millersville, who sits on the House Appropriations Committee. "I liked the place the way it was."

Sen. John A. Cade, R-Severna Park, said he was "concerned" but didn't know enough about the

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project to comment.

Gary went on a tour of the mansion last year when renovation work was being discussed and said he vaguely remembers talk of minor landscaping work.

"It was so casual — like, 'My

azaleas are dead and I'm going to replace them,'" he said.

Mark Edwards, a spokesman with the Maryland Historic Trust, said the Annapolis Historic District Commission has no legal authority over state property but it was "unfortunate" that the group wasn't told of landscaping plans.

"We have encouraged state undertakings to be reviewed by the HDC," he said.

"The concept of landscaping has really been on the drawing board for a couple of months," said Joe Harrison, spokesman for the state Department of General Services.

The funds came from the \$9.1 million budget of the department's  
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# MANSION

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Annapolis Public Buildings and Grounds Division. Work is expected to be finished by September.

R.W. Childs of Arnold, who submitted the lowest of three bids for the project, is replacing brick tile walks, which were cracked, with real brick, Harrison said. The walkways will be installed in a herringbone design.

The entire front lawn was dug up to remove the Bermuda grass which was infecting the sod.

"The way to get rid of Bermuda grass is to go to the roots," he said. New sod and new flower beds also will be planted.

"She's pushed for the landscaping," Harrison said of Mrs. Snoops.

"It's simply to improve the appearance of the mansion," said Louise Hayman, spokeswoman for the governor. "Some of that money would be spent anyway in terms of planting."

One of the most sensitive points may be the removal of three trees — two dogwoods and a holly tree —

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to make room for incoming heavy equipment.

"Trees are also part of the historical beauty of the city and shouldn't be taken down at somebody's whim," Gary said.

Part of the black wrought-iron fence also has been removed to widen the opening but that is expected to be temporary, he said. Despite the legislature's inability to stop the landscaping project, Gary said it could have repercussions.

"It's going to be like a lot of other things the governor has done. He'll do it and come to us after the fact . . . There could be some real friction."