

# HISTORIC RESOURCES PLAN

## **Goal:**

*Protect the important historic and archeological resources in the area.*

## **HISTORY OF OLNEY**

Olney has grown from an early nineteenth century crossroads surrounded by rolling farmlands to a twenty-first century suburb of Washington, D.C. Among the first to settle in the area was Richard Brooke, the “Fighting Quaker” of the Revolutionary War. He built a large home, “Fair Hill,” near what is now the Town of Brookeville, and his estate was called “Oakley Farm.” The manor house and land was passed to Col. Brooke’s daughter, Ann, who with her husband William Hammond Dorsey remained there until 1818.

Around 1808, Whitson Canby, a Quaker from Pennsylvania, bought an acre of the Fair Hill property and established a pottery works at the crossroads of what was then the intersection of Brookeville-Georgetown Road and Ashton-Sandy Spring Road. Canby produced earthenware sold at wholesale for large-scale distribution. William Kelly, a blacksmith and wheelwright from Pennsylvania, operated another turn-of-the-century business at the crossroads, which catered mainly to the area farmers for nails, hoes, axes, cooking kettles, and horseshoes. The area came to be known as Mechanicsville.

During the first half of the 1800’s, an agricultural depression affected much of the region surrounding Olney. The “Oakley Cabin,” a surviving historic resource, was built during this time. The cabin is believed to have been the home of enslaved peoples from the Oakley/Dorsey farm and later to free black families. Although the names of individuals who lived at the cabin before the 20<sup>th</sup> century are unknown, records reveal names such as Diggs, Wallace and Duckett, representing the African-American families who resided on or near the site.

By 1829, the crossroads community had enough business to sustain its own post office. Dr. Charles Farquhar, who now owned the house built by Whitson Canby at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Olney Laytonsville Road, named it “Olney House.” The name Mechanicsville was officially changed to Olney in 1851. The area became a vibrant trading center, with a tollgate and a turnpike, three dry goods stores, a post office, a blacksmith shop, a wheelwright business, and a pottery works. These businesses supplied the needs of a relatively small number of families living on scattered farms containing some of the richest and most productive farmland in the region.

Prior to the Civil War, African-Americans were attracted to this part of the County because of the anti-slavery sentiment of the Quaker and Methodist communities in the Olney/Brookeville/Sandy Spring area. In the nineteenth century, the greater Olney area was notable for the presence of a number of African-American communities established by freed slaves after the Civil War.

Olney remained primarily an agricultural area through the 1950's when rapid suburbanization began to occur throughout the County, mainly to provide housing for returning servicemen beginning families after World War II. In the decades that followed, Olney grew significantly, especially in the 1980s when most of the agricultural land south of the Town of Brookeville was converted to residential subdivisions.

## **PROTECTION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

The *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code, are designed to protect and preserve Montgomery County's historic and architectural heritage. When an historic resource is placed on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, the adoption action officially designates the property as an historic site or historic district, and subjects it to the further procedural requirements of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Designation of historic sites and districts serves to highlight the values that are important in maintaining the individual character of the County and its communities. It is the intent of the County's preservation program to provide a rational system for evaluating, protecting and enhancing the County's historic and architectural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations of Montgomery County residents. The challenge is to weave protection of this heritage into the County's planning program so as to maximize community support for preservation and minimize infringement on private property rights.

Once designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, historic resources are subject to the protection of the Ordinance. Any substantial changes to the exterior of a resource or its environmental setting must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission and a historic area work permit issued under the provisions of the County's Preservation Ordinance. The environmental setting for each site is the entire parcel on which the resource is located. The environmental setting of a historic resource can be modified at a later stage, generally when the property is subdivided.

In addition to protecting designated resources from unsympathetic alteration and insensitive redevelopment, the County's Preservation Ordinance also empowers the County's Department of Permitting Services and the Historic Preservation Commission to prevent the demolition of historic buildings through neglect.

The Montgomery County Council passed legislation in September 1984 to provide for a tax credit against County real property taxes in order to encourage the restoration and preservation of privately owned structures located in the County. The credit applies to all properties designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Furthermore, the Historic Preservation Commission maintains up-to-date information on the status of preservation incentives including tax credits, tax benefits possible through the granting of easements on historic properties, outright grants and low-interest loan programs.

The following properties in the Olney Master Plan Area have previously been designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and this plan reconfirms those designations, with the environmental settings and descriptive language included in the original designations:

23/005-000 Griffith (Israel) House 5900 Damascus Road  
 23/006-000 Dorsey (Samuel O.) House 5701 Damascus Road  
 23/008-000 Howard Family Cemetery W. Side Elton Farm Road near End  
 23/009-000 Elton 3801 Elton Farm Road  
 23/011-000 Howard Chapel Cemetery Howard Chapel & Elton Farm Road  
 23/012-000 Greendale Farm/Royer-Brooks House 23200 Howard Chapel Road  
 23/015-000 Tusculum/Griffith-Hutton House 4601 & 4609 Damascus Road  
 23/017-000 Edgehill 4920 Griffith Road  
 23/019-000 Retirement 5501 Griffith Road  
 23/026-000 The Oaks (Riggs House) 5815 Riggs Road, Laytonsville  
 23/027-000 Riggs (Samuel) Farm/Oaks I 5310 Riggs Road  
 23/029-000 Fair Hill 5929 Sundown Road  
 23/031-000 Pleasant Fields/Sundown Hills 4615 Sundown Road  
 23/033-000 Dwyer (Dr.) House/Bleakwood 3730 Damascus Road  
 23/035-000 Gaither Farm/Rolling Acres 3111 Mt. Carmel Cemetery Road  
 23/037-000 Triadelphia Historic District Triadelphia Reservoir  
 23/038-000 Triadelphia Cemetery South of Triadelphia Lake Road  
 23/045-000 Greenwood Mill Site Georgia Avenue  
 23/046-000 Greenwood 21315 Georgia Avenue  
 23/047-000 Pleasant View 21000 Georgia Avenue  
 23/051-000 Clover Hill 21310 Zion Road  
 23/053-000 Mt. Zion School 5005 Brookeville Road  
 23/054-000 Bon Secours 4901 Brookeville Road  
 23/057-000 Falling Green 4501 Olney-Laytonsville Road  
 23/058-000 Jones (Gustavus) Farm 4112 Brookeville Road  
 23/059-000 Locust Hill 4415 Brookville Road  
 23/060-000 Oakley Log House Brookville Road  
 23/063-000 Longwood 2900 Dubarry Lane  
 23/064-000 Oak Grove 19101 Georgia Avenue  
 23/065-000 Brookeville Historic District  
 23/066-000 Bordley's Choice/Marywood 20015 Georgia Avenue  
 23/069-000 Brookeville Woolen Mill & House 1901 Brighton Dam Road  
 23/071-000 Far View 21650 New Hampshire Avenue  
 23/072-000 Prospect Hill 1811 Brighton Dam Road  
 23/073-000 Gittings Ha Ha 21030 New Hampshire Avenue  
 23/079-000 Roslyn Bank Barn 20401 New Hampshire Avenue  
 23/081-000 Holland (Landgate) Farm 2030 Brighton Dam Road  
 23/082-000 Holland (Grafton) Farm 2240 Brighton Dam Road  
 23/084-000 Brooke Meadow 1711 Gold Mine Road  
 23/084-000 Ellicott Mine 2201 Gold Mine Road, Brookeville, Md  
 23/085-000 Fairfield 20010 New Hampshire Avenue  
 23/089-000 Walnut Hill 19515 New Hampshire Avenue  
 23/090-000 Riverton 1201 Gold Mine Road, Brookeville  
 23/092-000 Della Brooke 19300 Pyrite Lane  
 23/093-000 Sharon 1630 Hickory Knoll Road  
 23/097-000 Rockland 18430 Brooke Grove Road  
 23/098-002 Olney House Olney-Laytonsville Road

23/098-004 St. John's Episcopal Church 3427 Olney-Laytonsville Road  
23/100-000 Headwaters Long Driveway off Route 108  
23/101-000 Roseneath 17979 Bowie Mill Rd, Olney, Md 20832  
23/102-000 Olney Manor Farm 17510 Prince Phillip Drive  
23/103-000 John D. Berry House 17201 Palomino Court  
23/104-000 Berry-Mackall House 17017 Georgia Avenue  
23/106-000 Oakdale/Emory United Methodist Church 3515 Emory Church Road  
23/107-000 Hyatt-Jones House 16644 Georgia Avenue  
23/108-000 Brooke Manor/James Barnsley House 16300 Georgia Avenue  
23/111-000 Shaw (Nathan) House/Muncaster Millers House 15910 Emory Lane  
23/112-000 Sycamores 15708 Sycamore Grove Court  
23/113-001 Mount Pleasant Church 4021 Muncaster Mill Road  
23/115-000 Willow Grove 16301 Batchelor's Forest Road  
23/118-000 Amersley 16212 Whitehaven Road  
23/119-000 Holland House and Store 16400 Layhill Road  
23/120-000 Moore (Thomas) House 17214 Dr. Bird Road  
23/121-000 Bird (Dr.) House 17420 Dr. Bird Road  
23/123-000 Allnutt (Jacob) Farm 23601 Route 108  
23/148-000 Brookeville Woolen Mill Worker's House 20529 Riggs Hill Way

Resources in the Olney Planning Area currently designated on the *Locational Atlas*:

23/105-000 Higgins Tavern 16812 Georgia Avenue

# Historic Resources

