

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES

- Preserve and enhance the historically and architecturally important buildings and promote the creation of a legacy for the future.
- Identify and protect historically significant sites and architecturally important structures.

Historic preservation offers an opportunity to the people of Montgomery County and the Wheaton community to protect the remaining vestiges of a rich, local heritage. Some of these resources are significant by themselves and some are significant as a group, whether in suburban communities or in rural settings. The challenge is to weave protection of these historical resources into the County's planning program to maximize community support for preservation and minimize infringement on private property rights.

In 1978, the Montgomery County Council enacted an interim ordinance on alteration or demolition of historic resources. A critical first step toward a County-wide preservation plan, this ordinance was designed to extend some protection to historic resources until a permanent preservation ordinance could be passed. The interim ordinance worked in concert with the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*. Each of the resources included in the Atlas was subject to the review procedures specified in an anti-demolition ordinance. In addition, the resources on the Atlas were included in the *State Inventory of Historic Sites* and were subject to protection through a review process.

In 1979, the County Council adopted the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and the Historic Preservation Ordinance. At that time, a County-wide Historic Preservation Commission was established to administer the *Master Plan* and ordinance and to become a central clearinghouse for County historic preservation activities. The Commission evaluates and recommends historic resources for inclusion in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

This chapter serves as an amendment to the 1979 *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. This amendment designates resources within the Wheaton Sector Plan area on the Master Plan, thereby extending to them the protection of the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code. If resources are not designated and are removed from the *Locational Atlas*, they are no longer governed by the Moratorium on Alteration and Demolition, Section 24A-10 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Historic Preservation Master Plan Amendment Process

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 accompanying 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.

The following criteria, as stated in Section 24A-3 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, shall apply when historic resources are evaluated for designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*:

(1) Historical and cultural significance:

The historic resource:

- a. has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the County, State, or Nation;
- b. is the site of a significant historic event;
- c. is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society;
- d. exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities; or

(2) Architectural and design significance:

The historic resource:

- a. embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;
- b. represents the work of a master;
- c. possesses high artistic values;
- d. represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- e. represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or County due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

Implementation of the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

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 an historic area work permit issued under the provisions of the County's Preservation Ordinance, Section 24A-6. In accordance with the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and unless otherwise specified in the amendment, the environmental setting for each site, as defined in Section 24A-2 of the Ordinance, is the entire parcel on which the resource is located as of the date it is designated on the *Master Plan*.

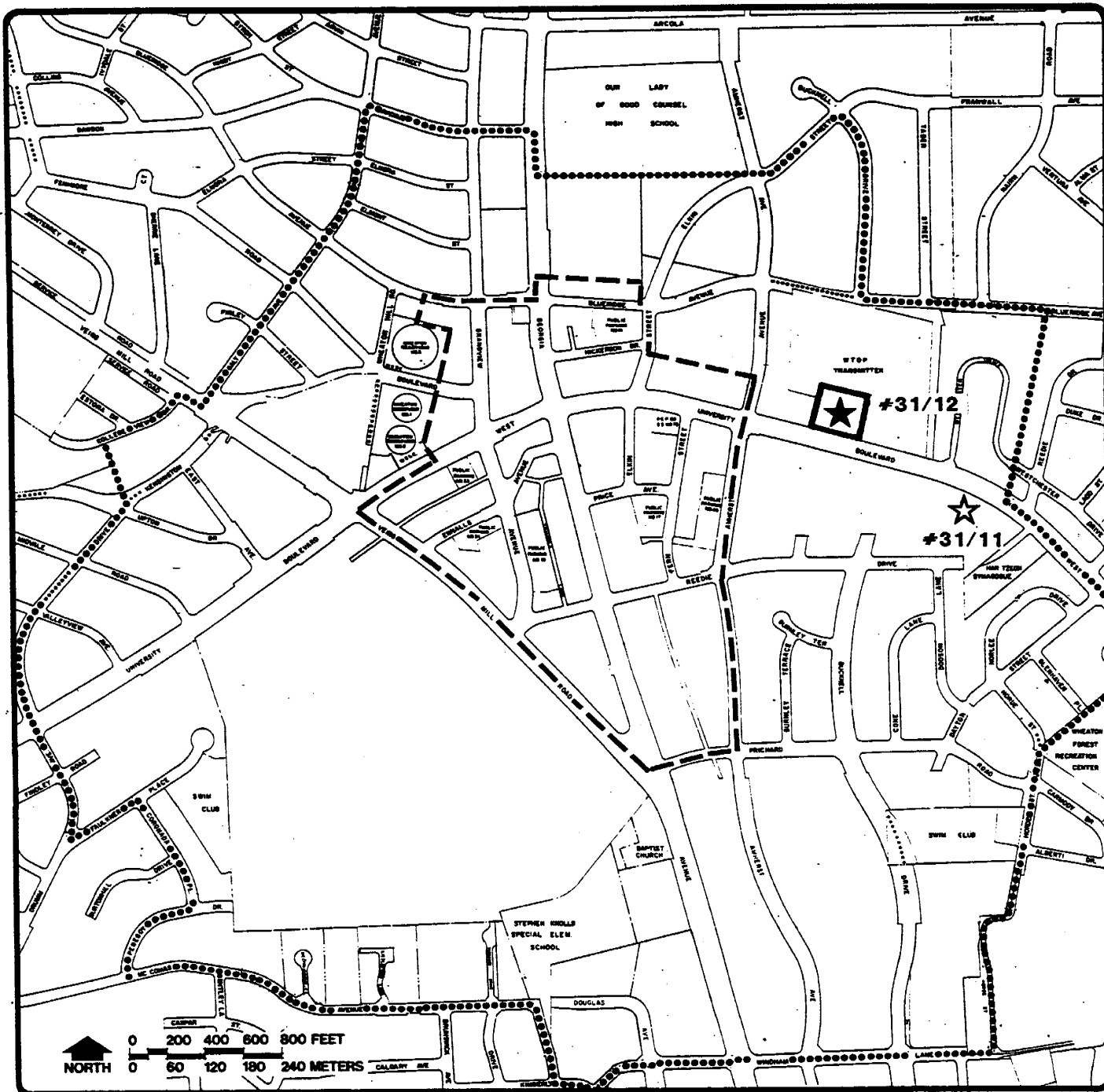
Designation of the entire parcel provides the County adequate review authority to preserve historic sites in the event of development. It also ensures that, from the beginning of the development process, important features of these sites are recognized and incorporated in the future development of designated properties. In the case of large acreage parcels, the amendment will provide general guidance for the refinement of the setting by indicating when the setting is subject to reduction in the event of development; by describing an appropriate area to preserve the integrity of the resource; and by identifying buildings and features associated with the site which should be protected as part of the setting. It is anticipated that for a majority of the sites designated, the appropriate point at which to refine the environmental setting will be when the property is subdivided.

Public improvements can profoundly affect the integrity of an historic area. Section 24A-6 of the Ordinance states that an Historic Area Work Permit for work on public or private property must be issued prior to altering an historic resource or its environmental setting. The design of public facilities in the vicinity of historic resources should be sensitive to and maintain the character of the area. Specific design considerations should be reflected as part of the Mandatory Referral review processes.

In the majority of cases, decisions regarding preservation alternatives are made at the time of public facility implementation within the process established in Section 24A of the Ordinance. This method provides for adequate review by the public and governing agencies. In order to provide guidance in the event of future public facility implementation, the amendment addresses potential conflicts existing at each site and suggests alternatives and recommendations to assist in balancing preservation with community needs.

In addition to protecting designated resources from unsympathetic alteration and insensitive redevelopment, the County's Preservation Ordinance also empowers the County's Department of Environmental Protection 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* (Chapter 52, Art. VI). 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.



HISTORIC RESOURCES

- ★ Resource Recommended For Historic Designation
- ☆ Resource Not Recommended For Historic Designation
- Environmental Setting Boundary

WHEATON

- Central Business District Boundary
- Sector Plan Boundary



SEPT.
1990

17



THE AMENDMENT

There are two potential historic resources in the Wheaton Sector Plan area: the Brick School (#31/11) and the WTOP Transmitter (#31/12). A map identifying the location of these resources is included as Figure 17. Both properties have been recommended for designation by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission.

This plan does not recommend the Brick School (#31/11) for placement on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and recommends that this resource be removed from the *Locational Atlas*:

<u>Site #</u>	<u>Site Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
31/11	Brick School	1920 University Blvd.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This structure was built circa 1903 as a public school. An earlier frame school on the site burned and this building replaced it. It has been extensively altered and converted to a private residence. - The building is a brick cottage, 1 1/2 stories in height, with a dormer set into a hipped roof of patterned tin. Four large, matching windows are found on both the east and west facades, typical of the windows found on school buildings of this period. The front and rear facades have been added to and altered. 		

This plan recommends the WTOP Transmitter (#31/12) for placement on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation as it meets Ordinance criteria 1A, 1D, 2A and 2E. An environmental setting of 1.4 acres is recommended and is illustrated in Figure 17. If designated as a historic site, the transmitter structure may be suitable for appropriate neighborhood or commercial uses as specified under the Planned Development zone:

<u>Site #</u>	<u>Site Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
31/12	WTOP Transmitter	2021 University Blvd.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This structure is a reinforced concrete, 2-to-3 story building which was constructed in 1939-40 and was designed by architect, E. Burton Corning – who also designed many major apartment and office buildings in the Washington, D.C. area. It has functioned as a radio transmitting station, first for WJSV and then for WTOP, since its construction. - The WTOP Transmitter exhibits the distinctive characteristics of the streamlined architectural styles of the 1930's, and particularly of the International Style of architecture: a horizontal orientation, a rejection of ornamentation, a reliance on smooth, planar building surfaces, and an emphasis on space as volume rather than as mass. - This architectural movement – the International Style – was promoted by the Bauhaus School in Germany and Le Corbusier in France, and is rare in the United States. The unique appearance of the WTOP Transmitter is significant both architecturally and as a landmark in the Wheaton area. - The WTOP Transmitter building was erected at the height of the 'Golden Age' of radio. At 50,000 watts, it was the largest and most powerful 		

transmitter in the Washington area. It symbolizes the remarkable technical advances of the radio industry and the contributions of this industry in disseminating information to a broad audience.

- During the 1930's, CBS Broadcasting was constructing transmitter buildings – many with unusual and modernistic designs – in different parts of the United States. The WTOP Transmitter was part of this major movement in transmitter structures.
- The environmental setting for the WTOP Transmitter is a 1.4 acre parcel which includes the transmitter building, but not the transmitting towers.