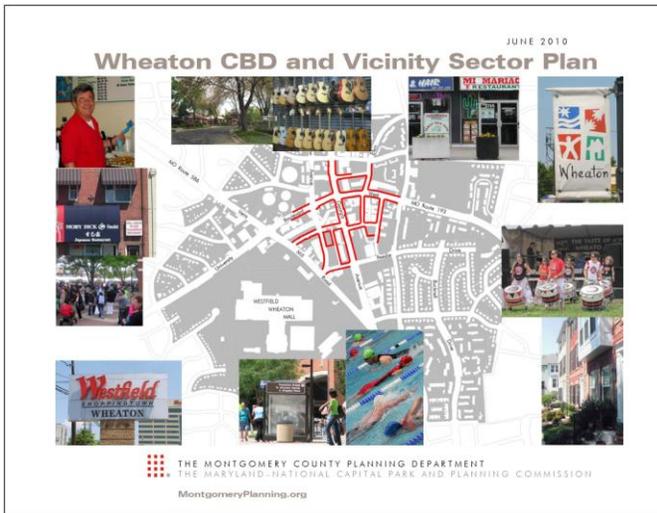


Appendix 6

Historic Preservation

For more information, call the Historic Preservation Division at 301-563-3400



Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan

Wheaton Historic Resources

Objective

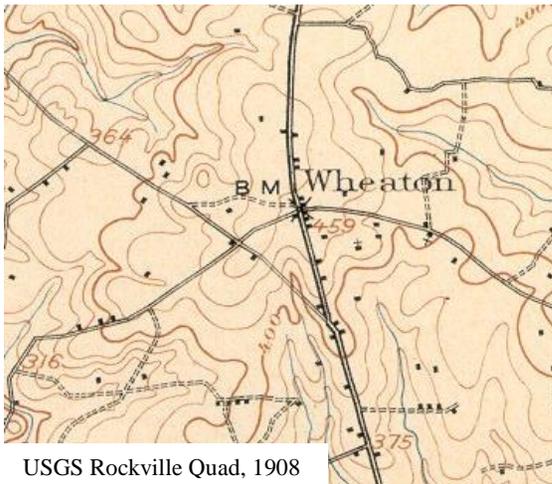
The intent of the County's preservation program is to provide a rational system for evaluating, protecting, and enhancing the County's historic and architectural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. It serves to highlight the values that are important in maintaining the individual character of the County and its communities.

Wheaton Area Historic Context

Wheaton's history can be traced to the beginning of the Civil War when the area was known as Mitchell's Crossroads. The name was derived from Mitchell's Tavern, which was located at the intersection of Old Bladensburg Road and what is now Georgia Avenue. Old Bladensburg Road is now University Boulevard and the Wheaton Pharmacy now occupies the site of the old tavern.

Georgia Avenue has had several names since the Civil War period; it began as Westminster Road, and then was called the Union Turnpike during the Civil War. It later became Brookeville Road and then the 7th Street Pike (as an extension of 7th Street out of Washington). It was dedicated as Georgia Avenue by Governor Theodore McKeldin in 1956.

Leesboro was just south of Mitchell's Crossroads at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Veirs Mill Toad. The collective area became what we now know as Wheaton. It was located in the Berry District at that time—what is now Election District 13 of Montgomery County.



USGS Rockville Quad, 1908

Wheaton was a well-traveled path for both Confederate and Union troops during the Civil War. Montgomery County, because of its position near the nation's capitol, was the location of fighting between the Union and the Confederacy. Citizens of Montgomery County were divided in their allegiance to the north or south. In 1861, at the beginning of the war, Union troops stationed in Washington marched into southeastern Montgomery County to stop Confederate troops who had been successful in defeating the Union Army in Poolesville and Darnestown.

The Wheaton area saw Union Army troops march through Leesboro and Mitchell's Crossroads out Union Turnpike on their way to Poolesville. In 1864, Confederate General Jubal Early's troops crossed the Potomac River into Frederick County and

marched through Montgomery County on their way to attack Washington. The main force came down what is now Veirs Mill Road to Union Turnpike on their way to Fort Stevens, north of Washington, D.C. Union Brigadier General Frank Wheaton was sent by Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant to lead the defense of Fort Stevens. General Early's forces encountered two regiments of Union troops, one at Monocacy and one at Silver Spring, which delayed their arrival at Fort Stevens sufficiently to allow time for Wheaton's regiment to get there. Under General Wheaton's command, the Army of the Potomac defeated General Early's troops and pushed them back in retreat along the path they had taken through Montgomery County. Early's troops both advanced and then retreated though Wheaton.

The second family to occupy Mitchell's Tavern was the Cissels, of Howard County. George O.B. Cissel raised his family in the tavern and built a store on Old Bladensburg Road across from the tavern. In 1890, he built two houses north of the tavern and sold them to two African American men, Richard and Jerry Gaither. In 1970, Gaither descendants were still occupying the houses.

The down-County area experienced a population boom after World War I as the economy grew and federal workforce expanded. This building and population boom generated a need for sewer and other public services. In 1916, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) was created by the Maryland General Assembly as a response to growth and as a means for County government to share local responsibility. The WSSC was the first regional public service agency in the metropolitan area. It was later joined by the State Road Commission and, in 1927, the Maryland General Assembly authorized legislation creating The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The M-NCPPC was responsible for planning and park facilities in an area

similar to WSSC—the District of Columbia was the southern boundary, with an outer line around Glen Echo, Alta Vista, Garrett Park, Wheaton, Burnt Mills, Beltsville, Lanham, and Capitol Heights. The special tax area excluded incorporated towns as well as the lower half of the Wheaton District.

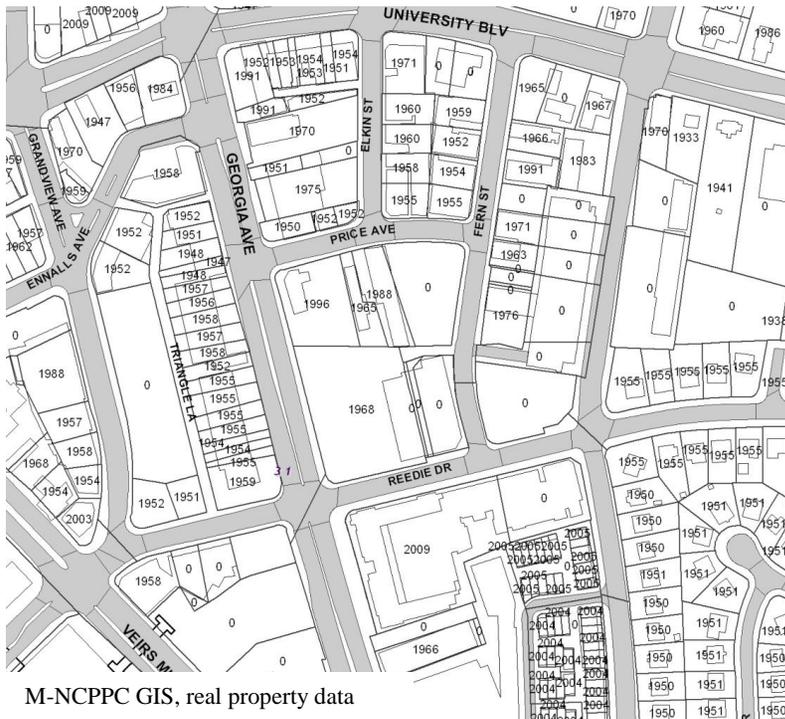


Wheaton Forest

Plans for the proposed Capital Beltway were unveiled in 1952. Commercial and residential development moved north of Silver Spring to allow access to this high speed route. Construction on Wheaton Plaza began in 1954, and developers planned and marketed residential subdivisions nearby.

Washington was the third fastest growing area in the country after World War II. Montgomery County became a bedroom community for nearby Washington and consequently experienced a severe housing shortage. Veirs

Mill Road, between Rockville and Wheaton, became a major corridor of suburban growth. In the late 1940s, E. Brooke Lee proposed, along with the County Commissioners, the approval of 200 temporary housing units. One hundred and twenty-five of those were proposed for location on Sligo Creek Parkway as a temporary housing solution for low-income veterans and their families. By 1951, all temporary housing had been removed; the housing units were sold to the occupants and the land was sold to a real estate firm. Montgomery County saw its second post-war housing boom in the 1950s and the Wheaton District continued to experience more housing construction than any other part of the County. Neighborhoods of Monterey Village, Wheaton Hills, Wheaton Crest, and Wheaton Forest date from this era and feature modest scale houses on curving tree-lined streets with apartments located on major roads.



M-NCPPC GIS, real property data

Most buildings in the Wheaton CBD date from the late 1950s and early 1960s. By 1963, Wheaton Plaza ranked fourth in size in the nation and further enhanced Wheaton's influence as a regional center of major importance in Montgomery County.

Montgomery County Historic Preservation Program

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. Placement on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* officially designates the property as a historic site or historic district and subjects it to further procedural requirements of the 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. The accompanying challenge is to weave protection of this heritage into the County's planning program 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; or
- 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.

Implementing the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Once designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, historic resources are subject to the protection of the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A. Any substantial changes to the exterior of a resource or its environmental setting must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and a historic area work permit issued under the provisions of the 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.

Designating 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 re-cognized 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 that 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 a historic area. Section 24A-6 of the Ordinance states that a Historic Area Work Permit for public or private property must be issued prior to altering a 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. 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 HPC 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 HPC 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 Preservation Recommendations

Survey of 20th Century Resources

- There is a need for a comprehensive survey of mid 20th century resources. As resources come to maturity in the Wheaton area, it will be appropriate to evaluate individual sites and districts to determine their architectural character.

Community Character

- Distinctive architectural features, including rounded or canted building corners, streamline features, and metallic detailing contribute to Wheaton's singular character. Retaining extant architectural features will protect this community identity.
- Urban design guidelines need to recognize the mid-century character of Wheaton.



Historic Resources

31/12 WTOP Transmitter Building, 2115 University Blvd



Designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in the Approved and Adopted Wheaton CBD Sector Plan of 1990.

Criteria: 1a, 1d, 2a, 2e

Environmental Setting: 1.4 acres

Marking a new era of communication technology in Montgomery County, the WTOP Transmitter Building is a rare and bold example of International Style. Washington architect E. Burton Corning designed the facility in 1939 and it was completed early in 1940. The transmitter, historically known as WJSV, had a cutting-edge design with a distinctive sculptural quality, lack of ornamentation, and stark simplicity that are hallmarks of the International Style that was virtually unknown in Montgomery County. Influence of the Art Moderne, popular in this era, is evident in curving,

streamline surfaces and the use of glass block. *Architectural Record* featured a two-page spread on the WJSV/WTOP Transmitter, in 1941; one year after the radio station began operation.

Technological advances in radio broadcasting demanded an appropriately futuristic architectural expression. When the WJSV began operating in 1927, the radio station had a 50-watt transmitter, and there were six million families in the nation with radios. In 1939, WJSV announced plans for a new transmitter to broadcast at 50,000 watts, the maximum power the FCC allowed. The nation's radio families had grown to 27½ million. WJSV was the principal station for the Columbia Broadcasting System and the Washington area's most powerful broadcasting station. The station's call letters were changed in 1943 to WTOP, representing the slogan "The Station at the Top of the Dial." WTOP is one of the oldest radio stations in the country. The station continues to be broadcast from this facility, operated remotely from offices in Northwest Washington.

31/10 Jenkins Broadcasting Station, 10717 Georgia Avenue



Designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation of 1979
Environmental Setting: 8757 square feet (Lot P9, Block 6)

This cottage was the center of operations for television pioneer Charles Francis Jenkins. From his television studio in this house, Jenkins directed teleplays enacted by his own staff and neighborhood children. Home viewers watched his soundless radiomovies with radio conversion kits invented by Jenkins and sold for \$7.50. In 1928, Jenkins received one of the first licenses in the country for simultaneous broadcasting. He set up a studio at 10717 Georgia Avenue and erected two 100-foot steel transmitting towers. A Quaker from Dayton, Ohio, Jenkins became a prolific and successful inventor. He held over 300 patents, including an 1893 patent for a movie projector prototype. The Jenkins Station broadcasted radiomovies from 1929 until 1932, two

years before Jenkins' death. His Radio Movie Broadcast Station provided one of the earliest regularly scheduled television services in the country.