CHAPTER 5:
HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The information presented in this chapter is adapted from the book *Places from the Past: The Tradition in Gardez Bien in Montgomery County, Maryland* by Clare Lise Cavicchi.

INTRODUCTION

Historic districts possess a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. Montgomery County has a diverse collection of historic districts. They encompass small rural towns (Beallsville and Hyattstown), railroad communities (Boyds), and streetcar suburbs (Chevy Chase Village), each of which has varying settings and distinct resources. This chapter provides historical information about each district and gives an overview of the unique nature of the historic resources.

*Historic districts marked with an asterisk (*) have district-specific design guidelines. The guidance in this document may supplement those guidelines adopted specifically for a historic district. In any cases where the district-specific guidelines and the *Design Guidelines for Historic Sites and Districts in Montgomery County, Maryland* are in conflict, the district-specific guidelines prevail. Please contact the Planning Department Historic Preservation office for additional information.

Historic District Maps
The maps in this chapter are for illustrative purposes only. Contact Historic Preservation staff for additional information.

Beallsville Historic District - 17/1

The Nature of Beallsville and its Resources

A small rural historic district, Beallsville was a crossroads community that served travelers and area residents for over two hundred years. The resources, which span a century, include commercial and residential structures which are vernacular in style.
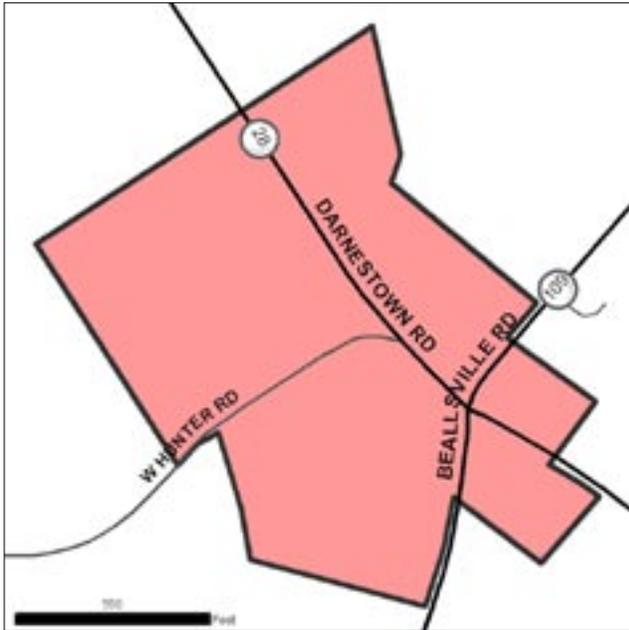
Located in the heart of the county's agricultural district, Beallsville marks the intersection of two historic travel routes. Anglicans in the Beallsville area petitioned the General Assembly for a Chapel of Ease in 1734, and so the Monocacy Chapel was constructed on the road from Georgetown to the Mouth of the Monocacy River (now Rt. 28). Nearby, Medley Hill became the first polling place in the area after the American Revolution. In September l790, the Potomack-Federalist faction in Maryland's early politics met in Beallsville to "consider the importance of the election for state and continental representatives." Although defeated by the opposing Baltimore faction, they obtained single district elections of congressmen, as opposed to elections at large. This was the start of the Medley Voting District, and the two-party system in Maryland.

Located on the 1838 mail route between Poolesville and Barnesville (now Rt. 109), Beallsville was a favorite place for local farmers to meet, pick up mail and a few supplies, and learn the local news. In the mid-19th century, Beallsville had a post office, gristmill, blacksmith shop, wheelwright, and general store, as well as the Monocacy Chapel and several houses.

During the Civil War, Union soldiers stationed in the Poolesville area camped at Beallsville. The Monocacy Chapel suffered great damage as soldiers used it as a horse stable and its pews for firewood. In 1912, the Daughters of the American Confederacy built the present stone Monocacy Chapel commemorating the earlier brick chapel on the same site. Many of the Upper Montgomery County residents who served in the Confederate Army are buried in the Monocacy Cemetery. A memorial tablet lists 32 names. The 13-acre cemetery contains some 3,000 graves.

Beallsville has had a post office and general store since the early 19th century, located over the years at each of the intersection's four corners. H.C. Darby operated a store on the southeast corner (now gone) before building the present Darby Store and Post Office in l910 on the northwest corner. The two-story, front-gabled structure is typical of Montgomery County general stores built from the late 1800s through the early 1900s. The Staub Building on the southwest corner, 19800 Darnestown Road, was one of the first auto dealerships in the area. Built circa 1921, the structure was later used as a feed store and post office before becoming a restaurant and post office. The spacious Darby House (1921) at 19811 Darnestown Road illustrates the economic importance of the merchant in small communities.

Completion of the B&O's Metropolitan Branch in 1873 spurred development of nearby Sellman Station, brought increased travelers and commerce in Beallsville, and triggered the construction of several modest Gothic Revival-style cottages popular during the period.

Boyds Historic District - 18/8

The Nature of Boyds and its Resources

Boyds, a well-preserved and cohesive railroad community in western Montgomery County, is representative of post-Civil War development and growth generated by the coming of the railroad to the area in the last quarter of the 19th century. There are three general areas within the historic district of Boyds: the commercial area north of the railroad along Barnesville Road, the Victorian village streetscape along Clopper Road and upper White Ground Road, and the folk architecture of the freed black community farther south along White Ground Road. Architecturally, most of the dwellings in the village itself date from the 1870s and 80s and reflect vernacular Gothic Revival detailing, including a cross-gabled roof and bracketed porches.

The community illustrates the impact of social and technical change on the area's agricultural community over the past century. It also reflects the early role of black citizens in rural parts of the County. Boyds was originally settled in 1753 on a tract of land named Resurvey of Gum Spring. The land was primarily farmed as a tobacco plantation, and the first residents were brought as slaves to the area. Following the abolition of slavery in 1864, some of the freedmen purchased property adjacent to the plantation. They built several of the houses and community buildings that stand along the southern section of White Ground Road.

Colonel James A. Boyd, a well-traveled Scottish contractor and stonemason who participated in the building of the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad, established the village of Boyds. In 1873, Boyd purchased 1100 acres of land on both sides of the newly-laid railroad track and built some of the first dwellings in Boyds to house railroad workmen. He then built his own residence as a progressive farming operation called Bonnie Brae, with several tenant houses and a dairy.

Boyds thrived because of its agricultural activities and its proximity to the railroad. By 1879, the village had a population of 100. James E. Williams of Clarksburg constructed many of the buildings in the district, including the Boyds Presbyterian Church (1876), the Presbyterian School (c1870s), and numerous houses for himself and his family. In addition, the railroad brought summer residents to the Boyds area to enjoy the rural setting away from the heat and congestion of the city, and many of the residences where originally constructed by these part-time residents.
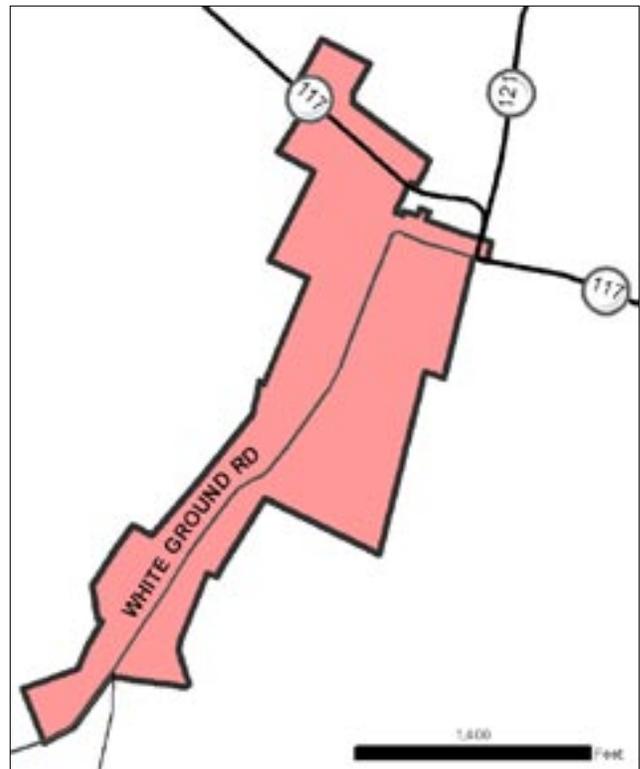
Several buildings in the historic district represent local African-American history. St. Mark's Methodist Church, 19620 White Ground Road, was built in 1893 for black congregates. The Diggens House, at 19701 White Ground Road, with two rooms on each level, is a typical example of post-Emancipation black housing. Boyds Negro School, constructed in 1895, is important as a surviving example of early education for rural black children in the county.

Brookeville Historic District - 23/65
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

The Nature of Brookeville and its Resources
Brookeville is a rural crossroads community with over 40 historic resources. The district is largely residential, with the majority of houses dating from the 19th century. Public buildings include a church, school, and post office. The district contains stone, brick, log, and frame structures designed in architectural styles including Federal, Greek, and Italianate.
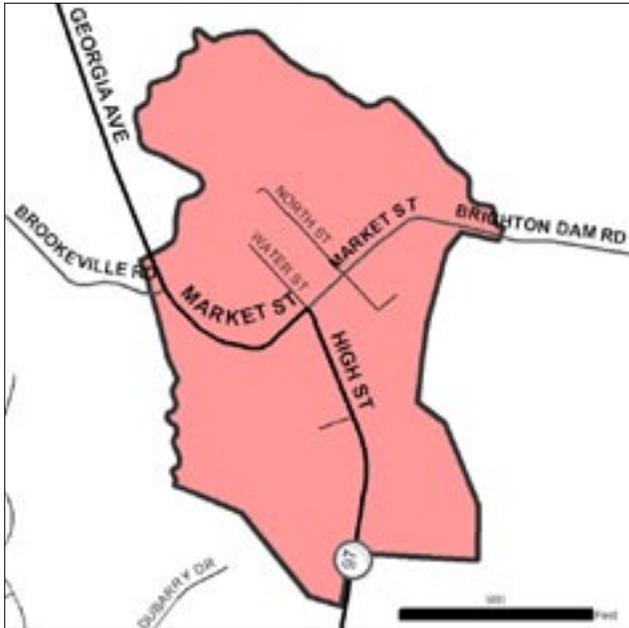
Richard Thomas founded the community of Brookeville in 1794 on land his wife Deborah Brooke Thomas inherited from her grandfather James Brooke. Brooke was an influential Quaker settler and a major landholder. Thomas laid out 56 quarter-acre lots sited along two major streets and two side streets.

Quickly growing as a bustling market town, Brookeville had two mills, a tanning yard, stores, a post office, and two schools. During the early 19th century, Brookeville was a center for commerce and education serving the surrounding, largely agricultural area. The Brookeville Academy, established in 1808, which attracted students from Baltimore, Washington, and Frederick, was one of the first private academies in the country. Male students came from throughout the state, boarding with local families and studying a classical curriculum with the aid of a 600-volume library. The first story of the stone building was built in 1810 and the second story added in 1840. In later years, the building served as the Odd Fellows Hall and as an annex for St. John's Church. In 1989, the Town of Brookeville purchased and restored the Academy as a community center.

The town played an important role in the developing science of agriculture. Town residents, including Thomas Moore and Caleb Bentley, were part of a network of progressive agronomists who initiated and promoted significant improvements in farming methods. By 1880, Brookeville was the third largest community in the county, with 206 residents. The town incorporated in 1890 with a local government of three elected officials. The town's commercial business began to decline in the early 1900s, as the advent of the automobile changed mobility patterns. Covering approximately 60 acres, Brookeville today consists of 55 individual properties with about 125 residents.

Capitol View Park Historic District - 31/7

The Nature of Capitol View Park and its Resources

Established as a railroad suburb, Capitol View Park is a picturesque blend of architectural styles dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The largely residential district of over 250 buildings includes Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman style houses.

In 1887, Mary and Oliver Harr purchased and subdivided land along the B&O's Metropolitan Branch between Forest Glen and Kensington. The community's name came from the view of the Capitol dome afforded by the upper stories of some of the early houses. Because of the growth of trees in intervening years, this view is no longer possible. Capitol View Park, however, continues to retain the scenic, rural setting which attracted its first inhabitants from Washington. Narrow, country lanes wind between large lots, the average of which is 12,000 square feet.

Capitol View Park represents the architectural history of Montgomery County over the last century. The first houses built in Capitol View Park were designed in the Queen Anne style, characterized by their picturesque rooflines, large scale, numerous porches, and variety of building materials, including clapboard and fishscale shingles. Notable Queen Anne-style houses, built in the 1880s and 1890s, are found on Capitol View Avenue, Meredith Avenue, Lee Street, and Menlo Avenue. Residents built Colonial Revival style dwellings beginning in the 1890s. These dwellings feature classical details including cornices with entablatures, heavy window molding, and large round porch columns.

Capitol View Park includes a small commercial district near the site of the railroad station. The building known as The Castle, 10 Post Office Road, began as a general store and post office in 1883. National Park Seminary's headmaster John Cassedy enlarged the structure and his successor James Ament transformed the business into an early sort of shopping center. Several small stores, post office, and apartments were united in a castle theme created by granite crenellations and turrets. Nearby, William Fowler operated a grocery store by 1925. The one-story Fowler's Store still stands, known today as Forest Glen Country Store.
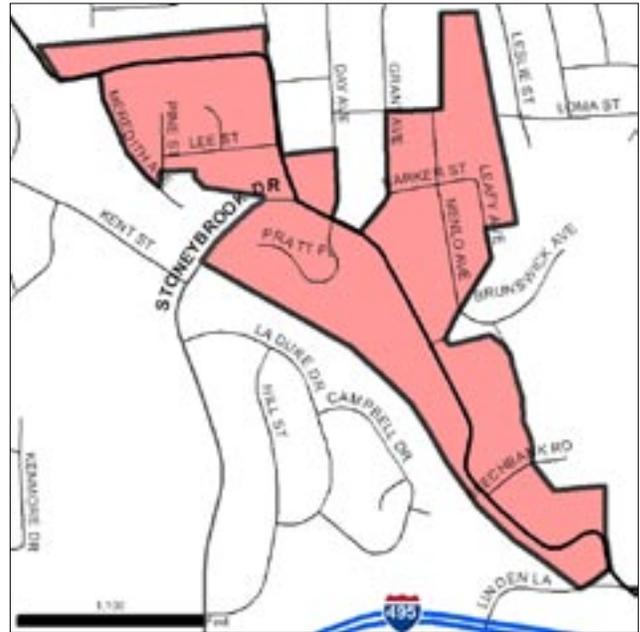
By the turn of the twentieth century, smaller-scale houses were becoming popular. Designed to harmonize with natural settings, these structures have a horizontal emphasis and were painted in natural tones. This group includes Bungalow- and Craftsman-style houses built from 1900 into the 1920s. Early examples are found on Stoneybrook Drive, Meredith Avenue, and Capitol View Avenue.

The pace of growth in Capitol View Park continued at a constant rate until the 1940s when a construction boom added nearly 50 houses to the community. Since then, houses have been added at a more leisurely rate, continuing the pattern of diversity that characterizes Capitol View Park.

Cedar Grove Historic District - 14/27

The Nature of Cedar Grove and its Resources

Cedar Grove is a small crossroads community that grew in the late 19th century with the arrival of the nearby railroad. The district consists of six historic resources, which are a church, a general store, and four houses. Two-story Vernacular Victorian frame buildings characterize the district. The period of significance is from the late 19th century to the early 20th century.
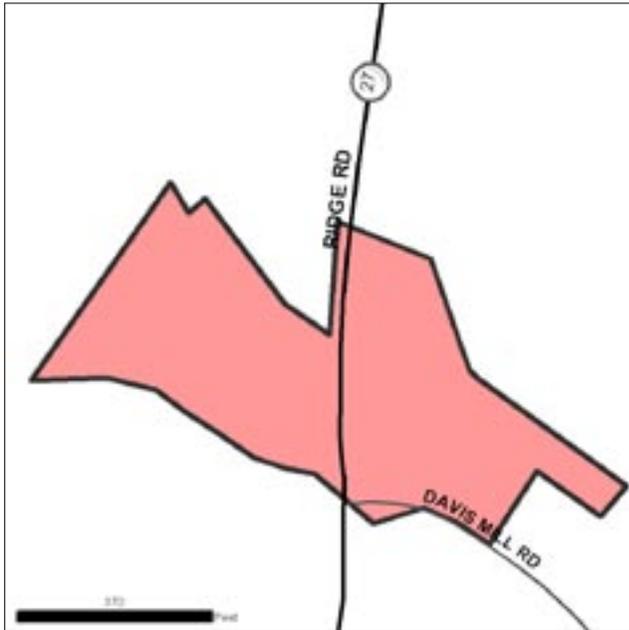
In 1851, Oliver T. Watkins acquired 200 acres, and by 1865, constructed a frame house on a knoll on what would become Ridge Road. When the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad opened in 1873, Ridge Road became a well-traveled route to the Germantown station. In this era, Watkins opened a general store. The Cedar Grove General Store, 23412 Ridge Road, built in 1909, is the successor to the original store and is built on the same site. The store is a two-story, front-gable structure, a commercial building form popular in rural communities from the early 1800s through the early 1900s. By 1878, Watkins had built another house near the store. The Oliver T. Watkins' House, 23406 Ridge Road, is a side-gable folk house of frame construction. Over the years, the conveniently located house became a storekeepers' residence.

The Upper Seneca Baptist Church dates from 1888. The addition of the church to this crossroads community increased Cedar Grove's importance as a rural center. The congregation, founded in 1805, is one of the oldest Baptist congregations in Maryland. Members of the Watkins family are buried in the cemetery.

Chevy Chase Village Historic District - 35/13

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The Nature of Chevy Chase Village and its Resources

Chevy Chase Village is a cohesive, planned streetcar suburb with an exceptional concentration of high style residences of the late 19th and early 20th century, including the Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, Shingle, Tudor Revival, Italian Renaissance, and Craftsman. Locally and nationally known architects designed many of the houses.

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Chevy Chase was Montgomery County's first and most influential streetcar suburb planned and developed between 1892 and 1930. It was the most visionary investment in Montgomery County real estate in the late 19th and early 20th centuries – representing the Chevy Chase Land Company's prototype for a planned suburb and setting the tone for early 20th century neighborhoods throughout northwest Washington and southern Montgomery County. Architecturally, Chevy Chase Village contains the county's highest concentration of outstanding architect-designed and builder vernacular suburban houses rendered in post-Victorian styles of the period 1890-1930. Together, the surviving plan and architecture of Chevy Chase Village represents one of the most intact and important examples of suburban planning and architectural expression built in the region before World War II.

Chevy Chase is nationally recognized as a prototypical, turn-of-the-century streetcar suburb providing upscale residences in a comprehensively planned environment. The driving force behind the development of Chevy Chase was Senator Francis G. Newlands of Nevada. Newlands is recognized as one of the first entrepreneurs to appreciate the speculative implications of the streetcar. Chevy Chase gets its name from a 560-acre tract of land patented here in 1751 by Colonel Joseph Belt, known as "Cheivy Chace." The name has historic associations with a 1388 battle between England and Scotland that involved a border raid, or "chevauchee," of hunting grounds, known as a "chace."

The Chevy Chase Land Company was incorporated in 1890 by Newlands and Senator William M. Stewart, also of Nevada. Newlands arranged for the purchase of land along the proposed extension of Connecticut Avenue from the built area of Washington on into the Maryland countryside. Under his plan, his associates, realtors Colonel George Augustus Armes and Edward J. Stellwagen, purchased the land that was then transferred to the Land Company. Landowners who appeared to be

holding out for excessive profit were bypassed by a shift in the course of the road and trolley. This accounts for Connecticut Avenue's change in direction north of Chevy Chase Circle.

From the beginning, Newlands sought to develop a singular neighborhood of the finest quality. Newlands' comprehensive plan included zoning, architectural design guidelines, landscaping, and infrastructure. The Chevy Chase Land Company spent millions on infrastructure improvements, including the construction of the trolley line, known as the Rock Creek Railway. The company built trestle bridges over Rock Creek, graded Connecticut Avenue from Calvert Street to Chevy Chase Lake, installed water and sewer systems, and constructed a power house to provide electricity. The $1,250,000 corporate investment in the infrastructure of the region was a remarkable statement of faith in the growth and progress of the national Capitol area and created the foundation for regional community building on an unprecedented comprehensive scale.

The Land Company hired talented designers, including architects and a landscape architect, to design the community. Nathan Barrett, a New York landscape architect, created wide streets, large lots, and parkland. Trees and shrubs were carefully selected to represent the best in contemporary style and taste. Leon E. Dessez, appointed the company's architect, prepared strict building regulations. Houses fronting on Connecticut Avenue were to cost at least $5000 and had required setbacks of 35 feet. Houses on side streets had to be worth at least $3000 and have 25 foot setbacks. Individual lots in both areas had to be at least sixty feet wide. Rowhouses, commercial buildings, apartments, and alleys were prohibited. In addition, Dessez reviewed plans for proposed houses within the village.

The first section of Chevy Chase to be developed was Section 2, now known as Chevy Chase Village, recorded in 1892 and opened for sale in 1893. Unfortunately, 1893 also marked the end of a real estate boom because of a national economic depression – the Panic of 1893 – and early sales in Chevy Chase were slow. By 1897, only 27 houses had been built and occupied. Most of the first houses were concentrated in the area immediately surrounding Chevy Chase Circle. After the turn of the century, sales picked up. Approximately, 145 houses were constructed by 1916, and within the year, lots in Section 2 were largely sold out.

Civic and recreational amenities were integral to the planned development of Chevy Chase. In keeping with Newland's concern that the new subdivision have buildings of "community interest", a series of early efforts were made to plant educational, civic, and recreational institutions in this area. The Land Company built the Village Hall at 5906 Connecticut Avenue in 1896. It accommodated the post office, library, and fire apparatus. In addition, Newlands and the Land Company supported the development of the Chevy Chase Club by subsidizing early fox hunting activities and, in 1894, acting as an intermediary in securing the lease of the original Bradley farmhouse as a headquarters for the club. Other efforts by the Land Company to provide full community amenities included construction of a two-room schoolhouse on Bradley Lane in 1898 and creation of a popular summer amusement park – Chevy Chase Lake.

Domestic architecture built between 1892 and 1930 is characterized by the combining of different academic architectural styles and forms. It is typical for buildings of this era to display elements of several different styles and types of ornamentation all on one structure. Academic Eclecticism is a term often used to describe this type of architecture – not meaning that buildings were designed with little forethought, but rather that the exuberance of the period led designers to break with rigid stylistic rules and freely combine the best of different forms and decorative motifs.

The Chevy Chase Land Company built the first few residences, setting the architectural tone for later houses. These houses were designed by Lindley Johnson, a successful, sophisticated Philadelphia architect known for his large country estates and resort structures. Several of these early buildings closely resemble the house sketches on an 1892 promotional map of Chevy Chase. The first house occupied in the community was the Prairie-influenced Stellwagen House at 5804 Connecticut Avenue, built for Land Company officer Edward Stellwagen around 1892. Another original Land Company house is the Tudor Revival Herbert Claude House, at 5900 Connecticut Avenue, which held the community's first post office from 1893-96. Finally, the Newlands-Corby Mansion (1894), 9 Chevy Chase Circle, was constructed as a gateway to the new planned community of Chevy Chase. Senator Francis Newlands built this mansion for his own residence. Its present Tudor Revival appearance is the work of Arthur Heaton, c1909-1914.

The residential architecture of Chevy Chase prior to World War I was characterized by large scale Shingle, Colonial Revival, and Tudor style houses usually built on sizeable lots. Many of the houses, owned by wealthy businessmen or professionals, were conservative and largely symmetrical shingled or stuccoed Four Squares or side-gabled Colonial Revival buildings with ample columned porches. With its maturing tree-bordered streets, the neighborhood conveyed an ideal spot for privacy and refuge from the city.

After the war, Chevy Chase benefitted from the prosperity of the 1920s and the explosive growth of the federal government. As reflected in real estate advertisements of the period, Chevy Chase Village had emerged as an established, planned suburb by the early 1920s. Advertisements noticing sales of both new and existing houses identified the area as "Old Chevy Chase, Maryland" or the "Most Exclusive Section of Chevy Chase, Maryland." Lot sales were so good in Chevy Chase by 1922 that the Land Company struggled to keep up with demand by opening several new sections – including Section 5, Section 1, and Section 1-A. Chevy Chase Village gradually evolved from a scattering of exclusive seasonal houses for the well-to-do who built large country residences on spacious lots to a solid, middle-class residential district of upscale houses mixed with smaller, less costly Period houses.

Outstanding landscape features which bear testimony to Nathan Barrett's original landscape plan, include the arched canopy of trees framing West Irving Street, and triangular park-like lots at Magnolia Parkway and Chevy Chase Circle, and at Laurel Parkway and Kirke Street. A major landscape feature – Chevy Chase Circle, located on the DC-Maryland border – unites the two jurisdictions and provide a gateway to Chevy Chase. The sandstone Chevy Chase Circle Fountain, built in 1932 and dedicated to Newlands, was recently restored by the Chevy Chase Land Company.

Taken as a whole, the buildings in Chevy Chase Village – sited along the planned, curving street system and surrounded by mature landscaping – represent an important cultural expression of American wealth and power in the early 20th century and reflect in their designs the optimism and comfort considered central to domestic architecture of the post-Victorian American suburb.

Clarksburg Historic District - 13/10

The Nature of Clarksburg and its Resources

Clarksburg is a rural historic district built on the linear Pennsylvania plan along the Georgetown-Frederick Road. The more than 20 historic buildings within the district include residential and commercial structures, which are largely frame and designed in styles that include Victorian Vernacular, Queen Anne and Colonial Revival.

Early in the county's history, Clarksburg was a substantial center of commerce and transportation. John Clark surveyed the land and subdivided lots along Frederick Road in the early 1790s, yet the town's origins extended back to the mid-1700s. Michael Dowden built a hotel and tavern about 1754. A popular stop along the well-traveled Great Road between Frederick and Georgetown, Dowden's Ordinary is said to have provided lodging and entertainment for such well-known travelers as General E. Braddock, George Washington, and Andrew Jackson.

John Clark built a general store and became the community's first postmaster. The post office, established in 1800, was one of the first in the county. By 1850, the town was the third most populous in the county, and the residents numbered 250 by 1879.

As a major stagecoach stop between Frederick and Georgetown, Clarksburg supported several inns and taverns. By the mid-19th century, the town also included general stores, a tannery and black-smiths, and wheelwrights. The William Hurley Shoe Shop, 23421 Frederick Road, probably built around 1842, is typical of early rural commercial structures in its simplicity and small scale.

Clarksburg has historically been a bi-racial town. While many African Americans settled, after the Civil War, in communities separate from white settlements, freed slaves in Clarksburg built houses in and around the town. One of the county's last and most elaborate remaining examples of a two-room schoolhouse is the Clarksburg School, 13530 Redgrave Place, which was constructed in 1909 and remained in continuous use until 1972. The cruciform-shaped building has a Colonial Revival-influenced design with pedimented and pilastered doorframe, oversize cornice returns, and gable overhang.

Growth in Clarksburg declined in the late 19th century, when the B & O Railroad bypassed the town for nearby Boyds. The advent of the automobile and improved roads brought something of an economic revival beginning in the 1920s. New boarding houses opened in town to accommodate the new auto tourism.

Forest Glen Historic District - 31/8

The Nature of Forest Glen and its Resources
Forest Glen was a small suburb that grew around the railroad and streetcar lines. The residential community includes high style Queen Anne and Stick Style frame houses as well as a Gothic Revival stone church.

Historically tied with National Park Seminary and Capitol View Park Historic Districts, Forest Glen was established in 1887. The same year, the Forest Glen Investment Company built a resort hotel known as the Forest Glen Inn. The hotel later became the centerpiece of a finishing school known as National Park Seminary.

A promotional brochure for the 166-acre Forest Glen subdivision haled the "healthy, well located, and easily accessible suburban village, and in addition, a commodious summer hotel, which should be especially adapted to the wants of the very large class of officials and business men who find it necessary or pleasant to remain near Washington during the summer months." The brochure advertised construction of beautiful houses, noting the expectation that more would soon be built. While the Forest Glen Inn proved a financial disaster and was sold in 1894, the area, however, continued to grow as a residential community. Developers organized a streetcar line, forming the Washington, Woodside, and Forest Glen Railway, to extend service from Silver Spring, through Forest Glen, with terminus in National Park Seminary. The trolley line operated from 1897 until 1927.

The center of Forest Glen is a block containing St. John's Church and Cemetery. The site is significant to the history of the Catholic Church in the United States for it was here that John Carroll opened the first secular church in the colonies. The cemetery, with gravestones dating to the 1790s, contains the remains of members of the Carroll family and many other early residents.

Surrounding the village green, resident developers and private individuals built picturesque Queen Anne and Stick Style dwellings in the 1890s. The Everett House (1891), at 2411 Holman Avenue, is one of the most exuberant examples of Stick Style architecture in the county. The president of the Forest Glen Investment Company built the Joseph Hertford House (1891), a high-style Queen Anne house with a three-story tower designed to offer commanding views of the countryside. The Forest Glen Post Office and Store were located near the train station, technically part of the Capitol View Park subdivision.

Garrett Park Historic District - 30/13
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

The Nature of Garrett Park and its Resources
Garrett Park is a picturesque railroad suburb whose historic houses date largely from 1890 to 1930. The early houses are high style, spacious Queen Anne and Colonial Revival examples, while later houses include smaller scale Colonial Revival residences.

In 1886, Washington, D.C. attorney Henry Copp formed the Metropolitan Investment and Building Company to develop a new commuter suburb. To cement its relationship with the railroad, the town was named Garrett Park, in honor of Robert Garrett, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. From its 500-acre parcel, Metropolitan Investment surveyed and platted lots from 3 acres to 5 acres on approximately 154 acres. Meandering streets north of Strathmore Avenue follow the topography, while streets to the south are on a grid. The landscape plan, with its dense shade trees and flowering shrubs, unifies the variety in street plan, and distinguishes Garrett Park from neighboring subdivisions.

Garrett Park reflects nearly a century of diverse architectural styles. The earliest houses were built primarily in the Queen Anne style, typically 2 1/2-story, asymmetrical residences with towers or turrets, and generous porches. One of the finest Queen Anne examples is the Stoddard-Freiberg House (1889), 4711 Waverly Avenue, adorned with a bell-capped turrent and lavishly bracketed cornices. After World War I, a group of four retired military officers formed Maddux, Marshall and Company, a Washington-based real estate development firm, to promote Garrett Park "to home-seekers of moderate means". The Maddux, Marshall Company built Chevy houses, one-story, two-bedroom cottages with optional garages complete with Chevrolet cars. The Chevy House at 10912 Montrose Avenue dates from 1927. Residences also include Sears mail-order houses from the 1930s, post-World War II Techbilt structures, and contemporary Frank Lloyd Wright-influenced houses designed by Howard University professor Alexander Richter.

Germantown Historic District - 19/13

The Nature of Germantown and its Resources
Vicinity of Liberty Mill Road, B&O Railroad, and Mateny Hill Road

The Germantown Historic District grew around a railroad stop and flour mill that served the local farming community. The small historic district contains a train station, bank, mill site, and cluster of frame Victorian Vernacular houses dating from the 1870s to the 1890s.

German farmers settled the Germantown area in the early 19th century. The initial Germantown settlement clustered around the intersection of Clopper and Liberty Mill Roads. After the introduction of the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad, the community known as Germantown Station grew about one mile north of the original crossroads community. The Germantown community became the center of commercial activity when the Bowman Brothers built a new steam-driven flour and corn mill next to the new railroad depot, making obsolete the earlier water-driven mills in the area.

Germantown's commercial district grew along Mateny Hill Road between the train station and Liberty Mill Road. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Germantown had two general stores, a post office, three churches, a bank, doctor's office, barber shop, and school.

The houses built within this period have strong uniformity and similar architectural details in the simple rural tradition of 19th century Maryland. The homes were built for mill and railroad employees as well as shopkeepers and ministers and were accompanied by domestic outbuildings decorated with architectural detailing. The generous front and side yards allowed for family gatherings, gardens, and perhaps a few animals, while shade trees and porches helped residents escape the heat of summer.

In the 1950s, dairy products replaced grain as the state's primary agricultural output, leading to a decline in the milling business. Popularity of the automobile enabled residents to shop in more distant shopping centers, people became less dependent on the railroad, and growth of the county's population turned cornfields into cul-de-sacs. Commercial businesses are now concentrated closer to I 270. The Germantown Historic District, designated in l989, preserves the heritage of Germantown as a flourishing farming and mill community, while continuing to focus on the B&O Station as a center for today's MARC train commuters.
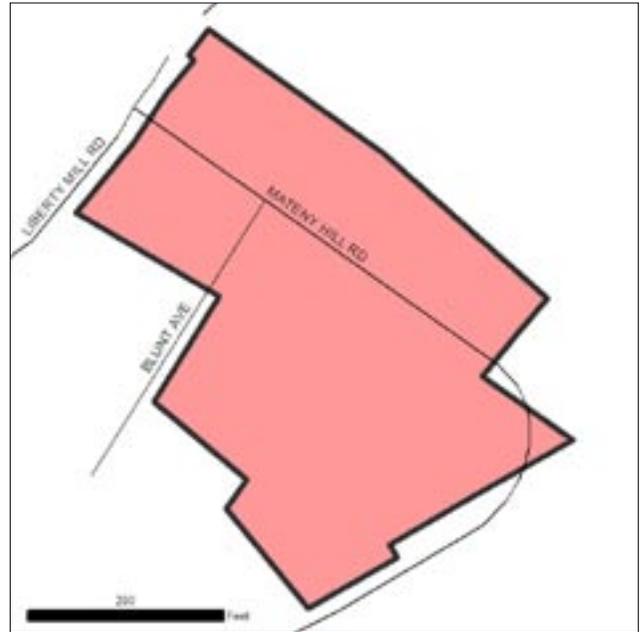
Glen Echo Park Historic District - 35/26
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

The Nature of Glen Echo Park and its Resources
7300 MacArthur Boulevard

Glen Echo Park was a streetcar-era amusement park. The historic district is significant as the site of a National Chautauqua Assembly and as a surviving regional example of an early 20th century amusement park. A remnant of the Chautauqua era is found in the 1890 rustic stone entrance tower. Historic amusement park structures with Art Deco and Streamline Moderne detailing were originally built in the 1920s and 1930s.
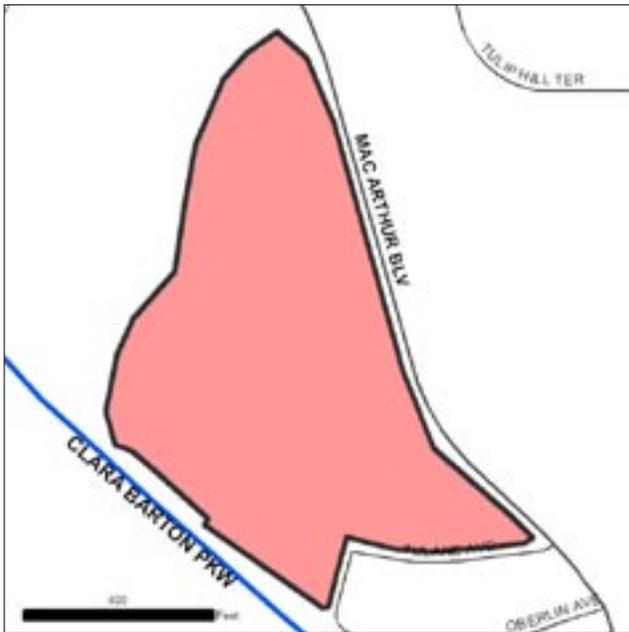
The Chautauqua movement, named after the first assembly at Lake Chautauqua, N.Y. (1874), was an effort to democratize learning within an ecumenical Protestant religious framework by bringing art, science, and literary culture to the masses. Coinciding with the flowering of the Chautauqua movement at the end of the 19th century were the plans of Edwin Baltzley, real estate promoter, and his brother Edward, for a residential and resort development to be known as Glen Echo on the Potomac. Envisioning the Chautauqua movement as a potential enhancement of their development, the Baltzleys deeded 80 acres to the National Chautauqua of Glen Echo, in 1891. To provide access from Washington, the brothers encouraged construction of the steam and electric Glen Echo Railroad, chartered in 1889. For construction of stone structures, and to fulfill their dream of creating the "Washington Rhine", the Baltzleys opened five granite quarries in Glen Echo.

Marking the park's entrance, the stone Chatauqua Tower (1890), designed by architect Victor Mendeleff, is the only remaining intact building from the Chautauqua era. The site first became an amusement park sometime after 1900. In 1911, the Washington Railway and Electric Company bought the site, expanded the amusement park, and extended the trolley line to its front gate. The Glen Echo Amusement Park became one of the principal entertainment centers in the Washington, D.C. area. The Dentzel Carousel (1921), a highly decorated carousel outfitted with 52 carved wooden animals, contains its original Wurlitzer Band Organ and is nationally one of the few historic carousels on its original site. The amusement park enjoyed its greatest popularity from 1923-39. The National Park Service purchased the site after the amusement park closed in 1969.

Hawkins Lane Historic District - 35/54

The Nature of Hawkins Lane and its Resources

The Hawkins Lane Historic District is a small kinship community of vernacular frame houses dating from the first half of the 20th century. Houses include 1 1⁄2 story bungalows built by Samuel Hawkins, as well as two story, front gable structures. With its rural character, narrow unpaved road, modest houses and mature landscaping, the district stands in contrast to neighboring residential suburbs.

Hawkins Lane was an enclave of free blacks established in the late 1800s. In an era of economic and social segregation, residents formed a close knit, self-reliant community. In 1893 James H. Hawkins, an ex-slave, paid $300 for three acres of land. Hawkins had twelve children, several of whom bought adjacent land, between 1894 and 1904, on Jones Bridge Road. Hawkins died in 1928 conveying most of his land to family members. Son Samuel, inheriting 1.5 acres, built the road now known as Hawkins Lane and arranged for electricity service, and with the exception of two houses built by friends in the 1950s, Samuel himself built all the houses on the west side of the lane, over a 40-year period. Representative of these is the Ella Hawkins House (1928), 8818 Hawkins Lane, named for Samuel's long-time resident daughter. Road widening and a fire destroyed two of the earliest houses, built by Samuel and his father. In all, the district contains fifteen historic residences. The modest residences along the narrow rustic lane reflect the heritage and lifestyle of determined black citizens in the early 20th century.
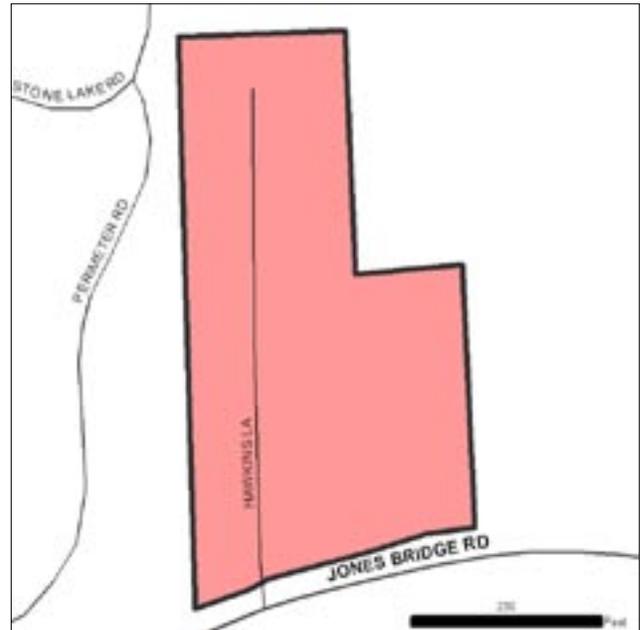
Hyattstown Historic District - 10/59

The Nature of Hyattstown and its Resources

Hyattstown is an early rural community designed according to a Pennsylvania plan. The linear nature of this town plan is characteristic of villages in Maryland's piedmont region and reflects German traditions. Houses are generally built close to the road and feature side gable roofs and front porches. Most are frame and many have log rear sections. Victorian detailing accents the largely vernacular building forms.
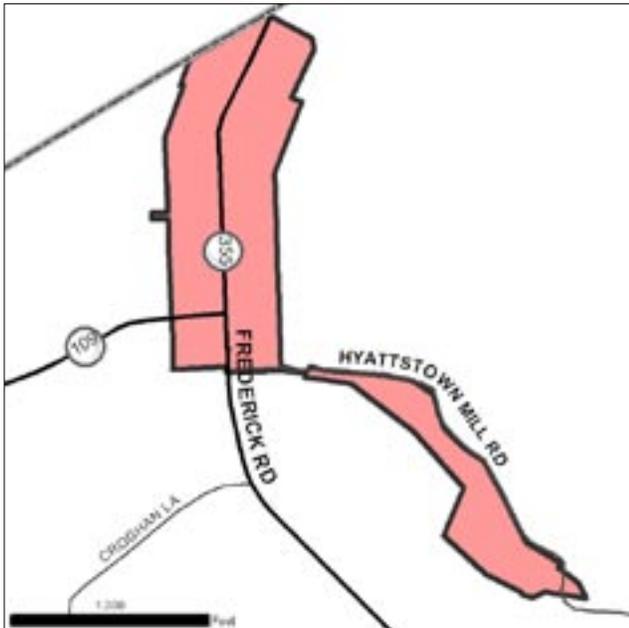
Hyattstown is an early settlement that developed along well-traveled roads linking coastal ports with the westward-moving frontier. The Great Road, known as Frederick Road or Route 355, opened about 1750 to connect the tobacco port of Georgetown with points west, via the county seat of Frederick. The Great Road attained significance in the 1810s as an extension of the Federally-funded National Road. In 1798, Jesse Hyatt, a Frederick County farmer, laid out a town, offering for sale 105 quarter-acre lots along the Great Road. Henry Poole built the first house in 1800 and became the town's first storekeeper. The town, named Hyattstown for its founder, was incorporated in 1809. By the mid-1820s, the community included an innkeeper, a tailor, a carpenter, a blacksmith, a storekeeper, and a constable. By the 1870s, Hyattstown's population had grown to some 150 residents, and by about 1900 to 275.

Many of the houses in Hyattstown include log sections that are covered with siding. The earlier houses, from the early and mid-19th century, are three bay dwellings with little ornamentation. The Davis House (c1810-15), 26020 Frederick Road, is an uncommon example of a brick Federal-style dwelling in the northwestern part of the county. The cornice line of the five-bay house is enhanced by sawtooth brickwork and end chimneys are flush with north and south gable ends.

Many of the post-Civil War residences have cross gable roofs, bracketed cornices, or bargeboard (gingerbread trim). One-story additions that served as doctor's offices or post offices are reminders of the commercial uses that supplemented the residential nature of the buildings. In recent years, many of the old homes were abandoned due to polluted water. After a new sewage treatment plant opened in 1998, residents are restoring houses and Hyattstown is once again becoming a vital community.

Kensington Historic District - 31/6
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

The Nature of Kensington and its Resources
The Kensington Historic District is a well-preserved, turn-of-the-century garden suburb with Victorian era residences, curvilinear streets, and a vital commercial district. Kensington residences are designed in a variety of architectural styles popular during the Victorian period, including Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival. These houses, built in the late 1800s and early 1900s, are clustered around the railroad station.

The community has its origins in a railroad stop known as Knowles Station, named after the major land holding family in the area. Beginning in 1890, Washington developer Brainard Warner purchased and subdivided property along the Metropolitan Branch, transforming the community from a small passenger stop to a park-like suburban community. He named his subdivision Kensington Park, after a London suburb, and established a library, town hall, and Presbyterian church. Under Warner's persuasion, the Knowles Station depot and post office eventually changed to the Kensington moniker.

Inviting friends to join him in the country, away from the heat and congestion of Washington, Warner established his own summer residence on a large, circular parcel of land at the heart of the community. The Warner Residence, also historically known as Hadley Hall, is sited at the southern end of the historic district, at 10231 Carroll Place.

Residents of the growing community incorporated the Town of Kensington in 1894, with its own governing body. The suburb's appeal strengthened when Warner and others organized a trolley line along Kensington Parkway to Chevy Chase, to connect with the Capitol Traction Line to Washington. The streetcar, which operated from 1895-1933, made Kensington even more accessible in the pre-automobile era.

The National Guard built the Kensington Armory in 1927. The Armory is one of the few remaining unaltered National Guard Armories that were built throughout the state. With its castellated parapets and drill-hall section buttresses, the fortress-like structure remains a Kensington landmark, today in use as the Kensington Town Hall and Community Center.
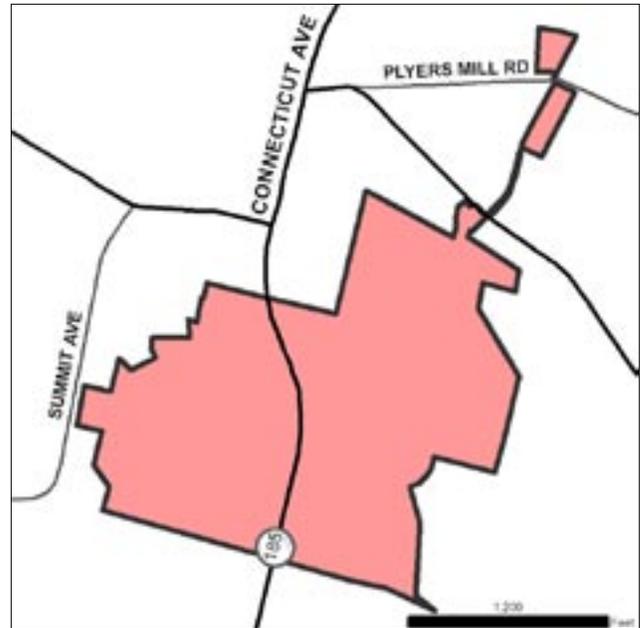
Linden Historic District - 36/2

The Nature of Linden and its Resources

Linden is a small railroad and streetcar suburb characterized by frame, 2 1/2 story residences designed in styles including Gothic Revival and Queen Anne. Streetcar era houses have Craftsman style influences. The entirely residential district is comprised of 17 houses built on a rectilinear street plan.
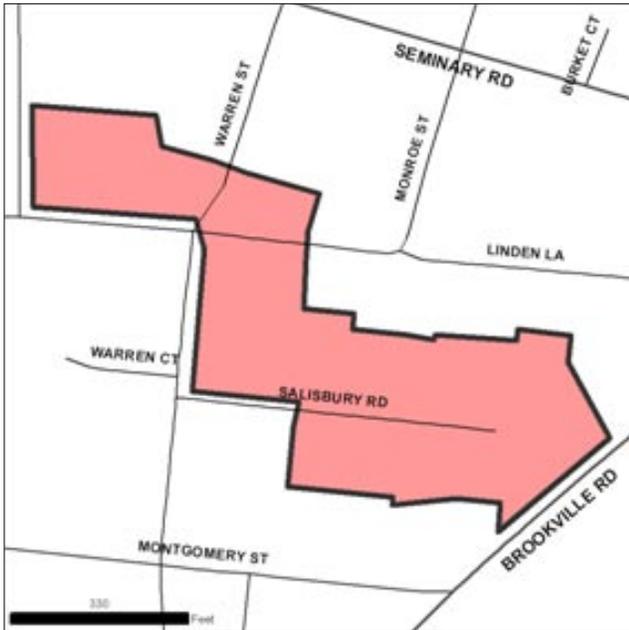
As the first railroad suburb in Montgomery County, Linden represents an early step in the county's transition from a rural, agrarian region to a commuter suburb. In 1873, the same year that the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was completed, Charles M. Keys subdivided thirty-two acres of his 185-acre farm and platted Linden.

Linden had its own railroad station, located at the end of Montgomery Street. Early houses were built on Salisbury Road, which was originally a walkway known as Maple Drive. The houses faced the walkway with vehicular access from Linden Lane and Montgomery Street. This arrangement is found in Washington Grove, a religious retreat also platted in 1873. Early dwellings in both communities were designed in the Gothic Revival style. Among Linden's earliest houses are a pair of Gothic Revival houses built on Salisbury Road, probably in the 1870s: the Baxter House, 2201 Salisbury Road, and the Doolittle House, 2209 Salisbury Road.

By 1889, the Washington Star reported that a number of "beautiful homes" – including examples of the Second Empire and Queen Anne styles – had already been constructed in Linden by "well known Washingtonians." By the turn of the century, there were about a dozen houses in Linden. In the early 1900s, citizens built Craftsman influenced residences on Warren Street. The historic district of 17 houses was designated in 1993.

National Park Seminary Historic District - 36/1
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

The Nature of National Park Seminary and its Resources
Vicinity of Linden Lane and Woodstock Avenue

The wooded architectural fantasyland known as National Park Seminary was begun as a resort hotel and blossomed into a finishing school for young women established in 1894. The buildings are a catalog of architectural styles designed to educate students in architecture from around the world. Included in the campus are Tudor Revival, Mission, Craftsman, Italian, Dutch, English Castle, and Swiss style buildings. Buildings date from 1887 to 1927.

The site began as a speculative real estate development intended to capitalize on proximity to the railroad. An ornate Stick Style hotel, the Forest Inn (1887), was the centerpiece of the resort, built with wraparound porches, towers, and applied stickwork detailing. When the hotel proved unsuccessful, John and Vesta Cassedy purchased the site, converting the inn into a boarding school. National Park Seminary became one of the most popular and exclusive finishing schools in the Washington area.

Between 1894 and 1907, the Cassedys constructed a score of fanciful buildings as physical manifestations of a basic principle in the National Park Seminary's educational philosophy stressing the importance of understanding foreign and domestic culture, and inspired by the grand, international architecture of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Sorority meetings were held in the English Garden Castle, Swiss Chalet, American Bungalow, Colonial House, Spanish Mission, Dutch Windmill, and Japanese Pagoda. Students resided in the Italian Villa and the Shingle Style Senior House. They took physical education classes in the Classical Revival Gymnasium and studied in the Shingle Style Miller Library.

Beginning in 1916, NPS President Dr. James Ament instituted his own building campaign, expanding campus buildings, constructing an elaborate network of covered walkways and bridges, and installing classical garden sculptures. Ament designed the last building constructed on campus--the awe-inspiring Ballroom (1927), which, when constructed, was the tallest building in Montgomery County.
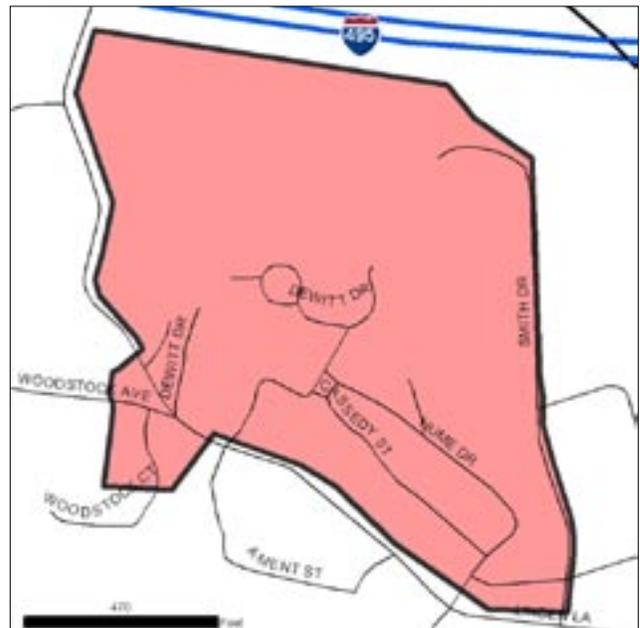
During World War II, the U.S. Army acquired the site for a convalescent center for soldiers. The Army relocated its medical facility to the main Walter Reed campus in Washington, D.C. in the 1970s, first using the buildings that comprise this historic district for administration and later abandoning them before deaccessioning the property. Many deteriorated and others were lost to fire and vandalism. Beginning in 2003, the district has enjoyed a renaissance, undergoing a major redevelopment effort combining the rehabilitation of historic buildings with sympathetic infill construction.

Polychrome Historic District - 32/5
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

The Nature of Polychrome and its Resources
9900, 9904 Colesville Road; 9919, 9923, 9925 Sutherland Road

The Polychrome Historic District is a cohesive collection of innovative concrete residences designed and built by a single craftsman. This Art Deco style district is located on a major thoroughfare in Silver Spring.

Master craftsman John Joseph Earley (1881-1945) built the five single-family dwellings that comprise the Polychrome Historic District in 1934-5. These unique houses are outstanding examples of the Art Deco style and reflect Earley's artistry and craftsmanship. Earley developed and patented a process whereby conventional wood frames were clad with prefabricated mosaic concrete panels. The concrete was stripped to expose brilliantly colored aggregate particles, creating an effect similar to impressionist or pointillist painting. In addition to their striking, richly ornamented appearance, these houses represent a relatively rare example of precast concrete panel construction in single-family housing for the time period. Earley's patented structural system led to widespread use of precast architectural concrete as a major exterior cladding material. The legacy of the Polychrome houses can be seen in thousands of curtain-wall buildings nationwide. In 1996, the historic district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sandy Spring Historic District - 28/11

The Nature of Sandy Spring and its Resources
One of the oldest settlements in the county, Sandy Spring was a rural, kinship community that evolved over time and was centered on the Quaker meeting house. This small historic district is entirely comprised of public buildings that reflect the spiritual and financial core of the community. These buildings are the meeting house (1817), lyceum (1859), bank (1895), and insurance company (1904) buildings. The district is characterized by simple design and brick construction.

Founding families were relations of Richard Snowden, Quaker developer and land speculator. In 1715 he patented Snowden's Manor, and in 1743 Snowden's Manor Enlarged which included the Olney-Sandy Spring area. His daughters Deborah and Elizabeth married James Brooke and John Thomas, respectively, and built houses in what became Sandy Spring in 1728. The settlement took its name from the Sandy Spring, a water source that bubbled up through a patch of white sand.

The Brooke and Thomas families were founders of the Sandy Spring Friends Meeting in 1753. The Meeting House served as the spiritual center for the community. While most other early communities grew around a commercial core, Sandy Spring evolved from the Meeting House. With the formal organization of the Friends Meeting, a frame structure was built in 1753. The Sandy Spring Meeting House, the third on the site, is a brick building, built in 1817. Typical of Quaker meeting houses, the Sandy Spring Friends Meeting House has a rectangular form with two front entrances, is simple in design, yet made of high quality materials. According to tradition, the bricks were made at a nearby farm and laid by mason William W. Farlin. In the adjacent cemetery, simple markers identify the Quaker graves. The earliest graves were unmarked, though written records report the first burial in 1754. The Community House is a two-story building erected in 1859 as the Lyceum. The grounds are sheltered by a grove of mature trees including a county champion yellow poplar or tuliptree.

The early 19th century was an era of prosperity in the community. A commercial area began to develop, with a general store and post office dating from about 1817. A blacksmith shop followed in 1819. By the mid-19th century, Sandy Spring was the center of innovations that benefited the entire county. The oldest agriculture organization in the U.S., the Farmers Club of Sandy Spring, was established here. Sandy Spring Quakers established early bank and insurance companies that still thrive today. The Savings Institution of Sandy Spring, organized in 1868, is the oldest bank in the county. Its first permanent home was the brick Sandy Spring Bank building, built in 1895. Established in 1848, the Montgomery Mutual Insurance Company was the earliest insurance company in the county, providing aid in time of disaster. The 1904 building housed the company before new quarters were built on Meetinghouse Road. Built by the community, the Lyceum (1859) reflects the Quaker commitment to education and continues to be a center of social and intellectual activity in Sandy Spring.
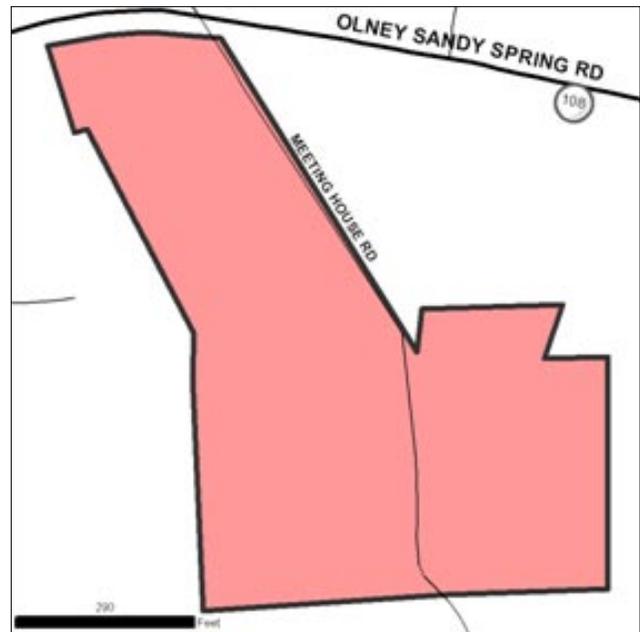
Somerset Historic District - 36/35

The Nature of Somerset and its Resources

Somerset Heights, established in 1890, was one of Montgomery County's earliest streetcar suburbs. The district is composed of some 50 historic houses dating from 1890s to the 1920s. These frame residences, designed in styles including Queen Anne and Colonial Revival, would have been considered comfortable and stylish in their day.

Five U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists formed the Somerset Heights Land Company, together purchasing 50 acres of the Williams Farm just outside of Washington D.C. Founders platted a community with a grid system of streets named after counties in England. Large lots with 30-foot setbacks sold for prices lower than those in the District of Columbia and were promoted as healthful and free of malaria. Three electric trolley lines and a steam railway (the present Georgetown Branch) were nearby for an easy commute to the District, while low taxes and the ability to vote in Maryland were also attractive selling points.

In 1905, there were 35 families living in Somerset. Residents successfully petitioned for a State Charter to incorporate as a town government and elected a mayor on May 7, 1906. The town council greatly improved the community's quality of life, upgrading roads, repairing pipes, providing adequate water service, and contracting for fire service.

Most of the houses in Somerset were not architect-designed showplaces but builder's versions of plan-book designs. Resident community founders did not construct high-style architectural gems, as in Chevy Chase's Section 2 or Otterbourne. If their houses, the first built in the community, set a tone for subsequent residences it was one of unassuming comfort.

Early examples of standardized builder houses are found in Somerset. In 1900, developer Edward C. Halliday contracted with builders Richard and William Ough to build speculative houses. Most of the Ough houses date from 1901 and are Four Squares with gable-on-hip roofs.

Today, the mature trees, landscaping, and original grid system of streets complement the visual streetscape established a century ago. Other important features enhancing the historic character of the Somerset community include: the spacing and rhythm of the buildings, the uniform scale of the existing houses, the relationship of houses to the street, the ample-sized lots and patterns of open space in the neighborhood.

Takoma Park Historic District - 37/3
Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

The Nature of Takoma Park and its Resources

The largest historic district in the county, Takoma Park is historically significant as both an early railroad suburb and a streetcar community. The district is characterized by a picturesque streetscape, hilly terrain, and mature trees. Late 19th century houses include high style Queen Anne, and Shingle. Dating from the streetcar era are Craftsman and Colonial Revival bungalows and Four Squares. Takoma Park has a high concentration of mail-order catalog houses.

It was the second railroad suburb of Washington, platted ten years after Linden. The opening of streetcar lines led to the development of new subdivisions, expanding the Takoma Park community in the early 20th century.

Throughout much of the 19th century, the land was open farmland and vacation retreats for Washingtonians. A few houses from this period still exist, such as the c. 1875-85 Woodward House, 25 Holt Place, and the mid-19th century Greek Revival Douglas House.

Takoma Park was platted in 1883. Developer Benjamin Franklin Gilbert purchased a 90-acre farm, platted a subdivision with picturesque, winding streets named for native trees, and promoted the property for its natural environment and healthy setting. Equally reflective of Gilbert's promotion of the natural setting is the use of the Native American "Takoma", meaning "exalted" or "near heaven." Later he added the "Park" appellation to draw attention to its healthy environment.

Takoma Park houses built between 1883 and 1900 were fanciful, turreted, multi-gabled affairs of Queen Anne, Stick Style, and Shingle Style influence. Some of the earliest architect-designed houses in the county are in Takoma Park. These first houses were substantial residences with spacious settings. The lots were deep, typically 50 feet by 200-300 feet with 40-foot setback requirements. The earliest dwellings, many of which are extant, were built on Cedar Avenue (originally known as Oak Avenue), Maple Avenue, and Holly Avenue.

By 1886, Takoma Park had a post office and a new railroad station. Fifteen trains a day ran between Washington and Takoma Park to serve a population of 100. By 1893, the town's population quadrupled. Four subdivisions had expanded the town, which was incorporated in 1890. Takoma Avenue, Pine Avenue, and Holly Avenue were among the streets to develop during this period.
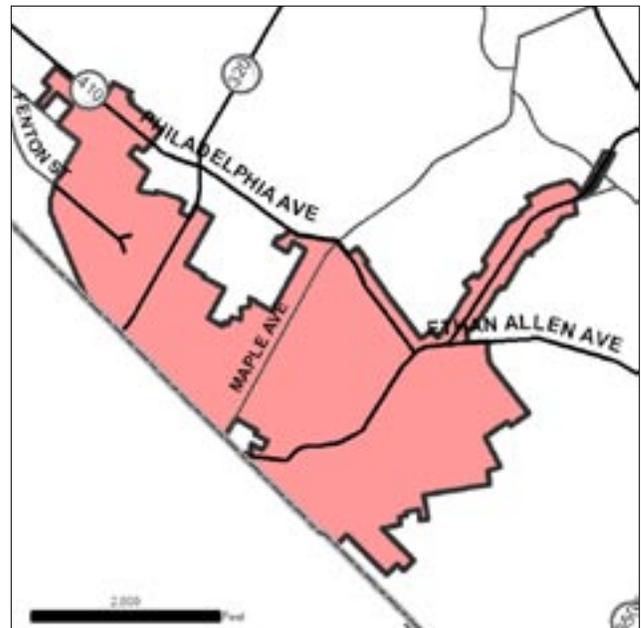
The start of streetcar service along Carroll Avenue in 1897, operated by the Baltimore and Washington Transit Company, made the adjacent areas more attractive for residential development, leading to new subdivisions. This line, supplemented in 1910 by the Washington and Maryland line (1910 27), led to the creation of eight additional subdivisions extending out from the trolley lines. The inexpensive electric streetcar, the availability of low-cost house plans and kit houses in combination with smaller lot sizes made home ownership in Takoma Park possible for individuals of more modest income levels than during the previous period. By 1922, the population soared to 4,144, making Takoma Park the tenth largest incorporated town in Maryland. Among the streets, which developed during the 1910s and 1920s in response to the establishment of streetcar lines, are Willow, Park, Philadelphia, and Carroll Avenues.

The appearance today of much of the Takoma Park historic district is formed by the large numbers of dwellings constructed from 1900 into the 1920s. The houses built in Takoma Park during this period reveal changing American tastes in house design from the elaborate ornamentation of the late 19th century dwellings to more practical, simplified designs. Many of these early 20th century houses reflect the aesthetics of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which emphasized the inherent nature of the building materials and structural elements for ornamentation. Similarly, they reflect a social trend towards a more informal, unpretentious style of living. American Four Square, Craftsman, Bungalow, and Colonial Revival designs continued the pattern of suburban development previously established. This included detached, wood frame single-family residences with uniform setbacks from the streets, though at a smaller scale. Entire streetscapes of these houses, particularly the Bungalow form and Craftsman design, are found along Willow, Park, Philadelphia, and Westmoreland Avenues.

Scores of Bungalows, and Craftsman-style houses and catalog-order houses were built in this era. Advertisements from 1914 for bungalows on Willow Avenue promoted their accessibility just "three minutes to car line" and individuality "no two are alike in design." At least fifteen models of Sears kit houses have been identified in the historic district.

Takoma Park's commercial areas known as Old Town and Takoma Junction retain much of their early 20th century character. Most of the buildings are one-two story brick structures with simple detailing. Particularly noteworthy examples are the Park Pharmacy building prominently located at the intersection of Laurel and Carroll and the commercial building at 7000 Carroll Avenue which exemplifies the Art Deco period with its zigzag motif cornice and polygonal light fixtures. The Sovran Bank building at Carroll and Willow (originally the Suburban Trust) is a distinguished example of Beaux Arts design.

Takoma Park continues to thrive today, with a population of 20,000. Though the train no longer stops there, the town's close relationship with mass transportation continues. The Metro enables residents to continue the tradition, started with the railroad and extended with the streetcars, of living in the suburbs and commuting to the District using mass transit. Two sections of Takoma Park have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.