

PLANNING BOARD DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE
MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND:

FALKLAND APARTMENTS, #36/12



Montgomery County
Planning Department
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL
CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING
COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

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Planning Board Draft Amendment to the
Master Plan for Historic Preservation:

FALKLAND APARTMENTS, #36/12

PLANNING BOARD
(FINAL) DRAFT

AMENDMENT TO THE
MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

FALKLAND APARTMENTS, #36/12

An amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation; being also an amendment to the Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan (1993, amended 2000); and an amendment to the General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District within Montgomery County, Maryland.

Prepared By:

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760
November 2008

Reviewed By:

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE
(Date to be Established)

Approved By:

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
(Date to be Established)

ABSTRACT

TITLE: Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Falkland Apartments*

AUTHOR: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Falkland Apartments*

DATE: November 2008

PLANNING AGENCY: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

SOURCE OF COPIES: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

ABSTRACT: This document contains the text, with supporting maps, for an amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County*, being also an amendment to the *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan (1993, amended 2000)*; and an amendment to the *General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District Within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*. This amendment considers the historic designation of one individual site, the Falkland Apartments. The Amendment recommends designation of two parcels, located on parcels P555 and P532, being the south and west parcels, on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, thereby extending to them the protection of County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

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MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

Master Plans provide policy guidance concerning the private and public use of land, for use and reference by private landowners, public agencies, and interested parties generally. Every master plan amendment also amends the General Plan for Montgomery County. The process of initiation, review, and adoption of amendments is generally as follows:

Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment

This document is a formal proposal to amend an adopted master plan. It is prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Before proceeding to publish a final draft of the amendment, the Planning Board must hold a public hearing. After the close of the record of this public hearing, the Planning Board holds an open worksession to review the testimony, and to determine whether to make any revisions to the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft.

Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment

This document contains the Planning Board's final recommendations. It is transmitted to the County Council for review. In addition, the County Executive is sent a copy and has sixty days in which to provide comments on the amendment.

The County Council typically schedules a public hearing on the Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment. After the close of record of this public hearing, the Council holds an open worksession to review the testimony, and then adopts a resolution approving, modifying, or disapproving the amendment.

Failure of the County Council to act within the prescribed time limits constitutes approval of the plan amendment as submitted to the body that fails to act.

Adopted Amendment

The amendment approved by the County Council is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the amendment officially amends the various master plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

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; 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.

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 a 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 many cases, the parcels of land on which historic resources sit are also impacted by other planned facilities in the master plan; this is particularly true with respect to transportation right-of-way. In general, when establishing an Environmental Setting boundary for a historic resource, the need for the ultimate transportation facility is also acknowledged, and the Environmental Setting includes the entire parcel minus the approved and adopted master planned right-of-way. However, in some specific cases, the master planned right-of-way directly impacts an important contributing element to the historic resource. In such cases the amendment addresses the specific conflicts existing at the site, and suggests alternatives and recommendations to assist in balancing preservation with the implementation of other equally important 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 program.

BACKGROUND

The Falkland Apartments are an individual resource listed on the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*, Resource #36/12. The Falkland Apartments are located on three adjacent parcels located at the intersection of East-West Highway and 16th Street in Silver Spring. The parcels, identified on the map p.2, are the following:

North parcel –

P393, bounded by East-West Highway, 16th Street, and the CSX/Metro transitway

South Parcel –

P555, bounded by Colesville Road, East-West Highway, and 16th Street

West Parcel –

P532, bounded by 16th Street, East-West Highway, and the District of Columbia

Chapter 24A-10 Evaluation

The owner of the Falkland Apartments submitted a project plan application that proposed demolition of all existing buildings on the north parcel. This application triggered Chapter 24A-10, a Moratorium on Demolition, a process to determine whether in all likelihood the resource merits designation on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

The HPC voted unanimously, in August 2007, to recommend all three parcels be found eligible for designation. The Planning Board concurred by a 4-1 vote on December 6, 2007 that all three parcels are eligible for designation. The Planning Board directed staff to initiate an Amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* to consider the historic designation of the Falkland Apartments.

Evaluation for Designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission Findings

The Historic Preservation Commission evaluated the Falkland Apartments amendment on February 27, 2008. The HPC unanimously voted in favor of recommending inclusion of all three parcels of the Falkland Apartment complex on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The Commission found that the Falkland Apartments is of a coherent and cohesive design constructed within the 1936-38 period, and that all three parcels are crucial for telling the story of this important garden apartment complex.

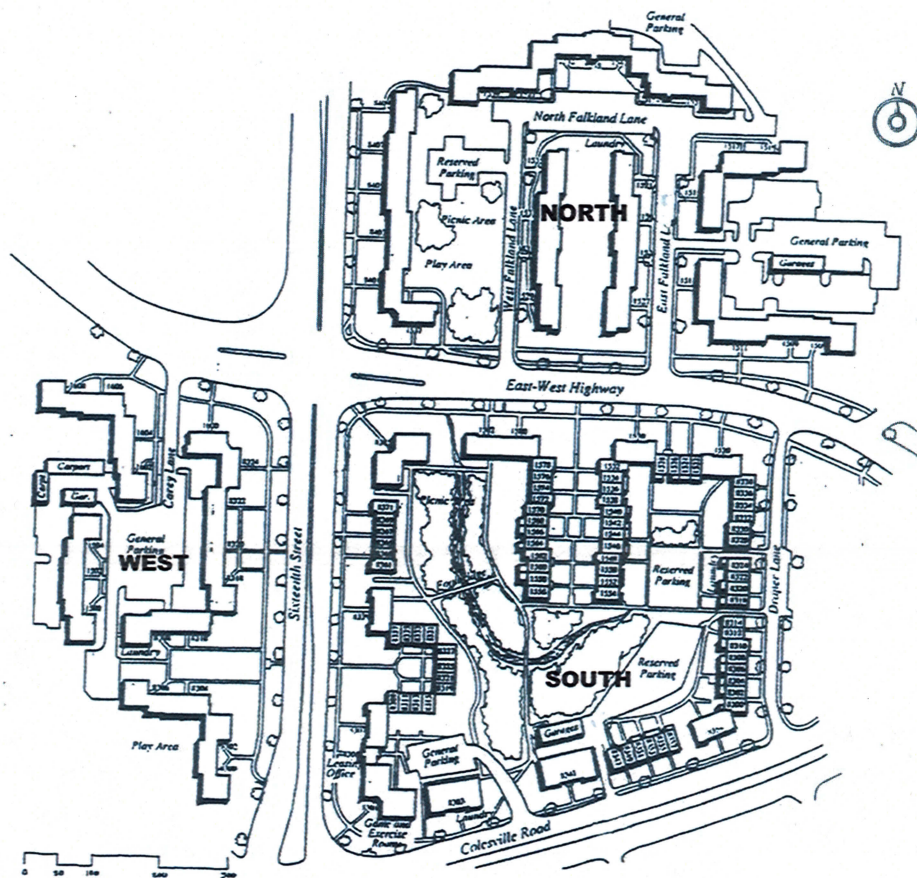
Montgomery County Planning Board Findings

The Planning Board held a public hearing on July 10, 2008 and a worksession on September 4, 2008. The Planning Board identified potential public benefits associated with redevelopment of the North Parcel, including the location of a mix of unit types, low-income and workforce housing, and well designed mixed-use

development in close proximity to an existing metro station. At the conclusion of the worksession, the Planning Board voted to recommend designation of the south and west parcels to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

In order to realize these public benefits, the Planning Board is retaining the north parcel on the *Locational Atlas* until approval of a site plan or site plans covering the entire north parcel, at which time the north parcel will be automatically removed from the *Locational Atlas*. In the event more than one site plan is filed for the north parcel, that parcel will only be removed from the *Locational Atlas* with approval of the certified site plan covering the last portion of the north parcel for which no certified site plan has been approved.

The County Council will make the final decision on whether the Falkland Apartments are designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* in whole or in part, or not at all.



THE AMENDMENT

The Amendment recommends designation of two parcels, located on parcels P555 and P532, being the south and west parcels, on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, thereby extending to them the protection of County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

Individual Site Recommended for Designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

FALKLAND APARTMENTS, Resource #36/12, Silver Spring

- Designate two parcels:
 - South Parcel, P555, bounded by Colesville Road, East-West Highway, and 16th Street
 - West Parcel, P532, bounded by 16th Street, East-West Highway, and the District of Columbia
- The Falkland Apartments complex was designed by architect Louis Justement, a Washington D.C. area architect who was active in the Washington D.C. chapter of the AIA. Falklands was built in two phases, the first 178 units were built on the South Parcel in 1936 and 1937, and 301 units were built on the West and North Parcels, from 1937 to 1938. The complex is of a coherent and cohesive design constructed within the 1936-38 period.
- The Falklands are significant in the history of community planning as an early example of a building type: the garden apartment. Garden apartments are a planned suburban community consisting of moderately priced houses in a natural setting. In contrast to urban apartments, they were built in groups, integrated in a natural setting, often around a courtyard, and typically 2-3 stories tall. The aim of garden apartments was to provide a healthy alternative to city living conditions for people of modest means. Falkland Apartments is the first example of a garden apartment complex in Montgomery County, and one of the earliest of its type in the United States.
- The Falkland Apartments are highly representative of the New Deal era. Eleanor Roosevelt herself inaugurated the Falkland Apartments in a ribbon-cutting ceremony in 1937, when the first phase was complete and the second phase was underway. The complex represents the explosion of population in lower Montgomery County following the New Deal programs. The flood of people coming into the region to work in the new federal government programs needed places to live. The county's population grew more than 70% in the 1930s. Falkland Apartments was the first large-scale rental housing project in Maryland whose mortgage was backed by the newly established Federal Housing Administration (FHA).

- The complex is representative of construction and design standards set by the FHA for comfortable, functional, and attractive housing. The resource is highly representative of the formal and traditional Colonial Revival style architecture of its era. The success of the site plan design was noted in contemporary journals, including *Architectural Record* and *Architectural Forum*. Notable design elements of garden apartments include landscaped courtyards, staggered setbacks, tree-shaded winding pathways, ample green space, and preservation of natural features. A natural setting was a key feature of the Falkland plan. Architect Louis Justement described the goal of carefully preserving the Y-shaped stream valley and original flora. The north section includes specimen white pines, hawthorns and cedars.
- In the history of Silver Spring development, the Falkland Apartments are contemporaneous with the first Silver Spring Post Office (1937) and the Silver Theatre and Shopping Center (1938). Both are Master Plan sites. The Falklands were built three years earlier than another Master Plan site, the Montgomery Arms Apartments, three Art Deco apartments arranged around a single courtyard.
- The Falkland Apartments have had some alterations. A portion of the original block of apartments, consisting of six two-story buildings west of Draper Lane, was demolished and replaced in 1992 by the high-rise Lenox Park Apartments. The Falkland Apartments have suffered some material change, notably window replacement. Despite these changes, the Falkland Apartments retain a high level of integrity.
- Meets criteria 1a, 1d, and 2a.



Streetscape, 16th Street

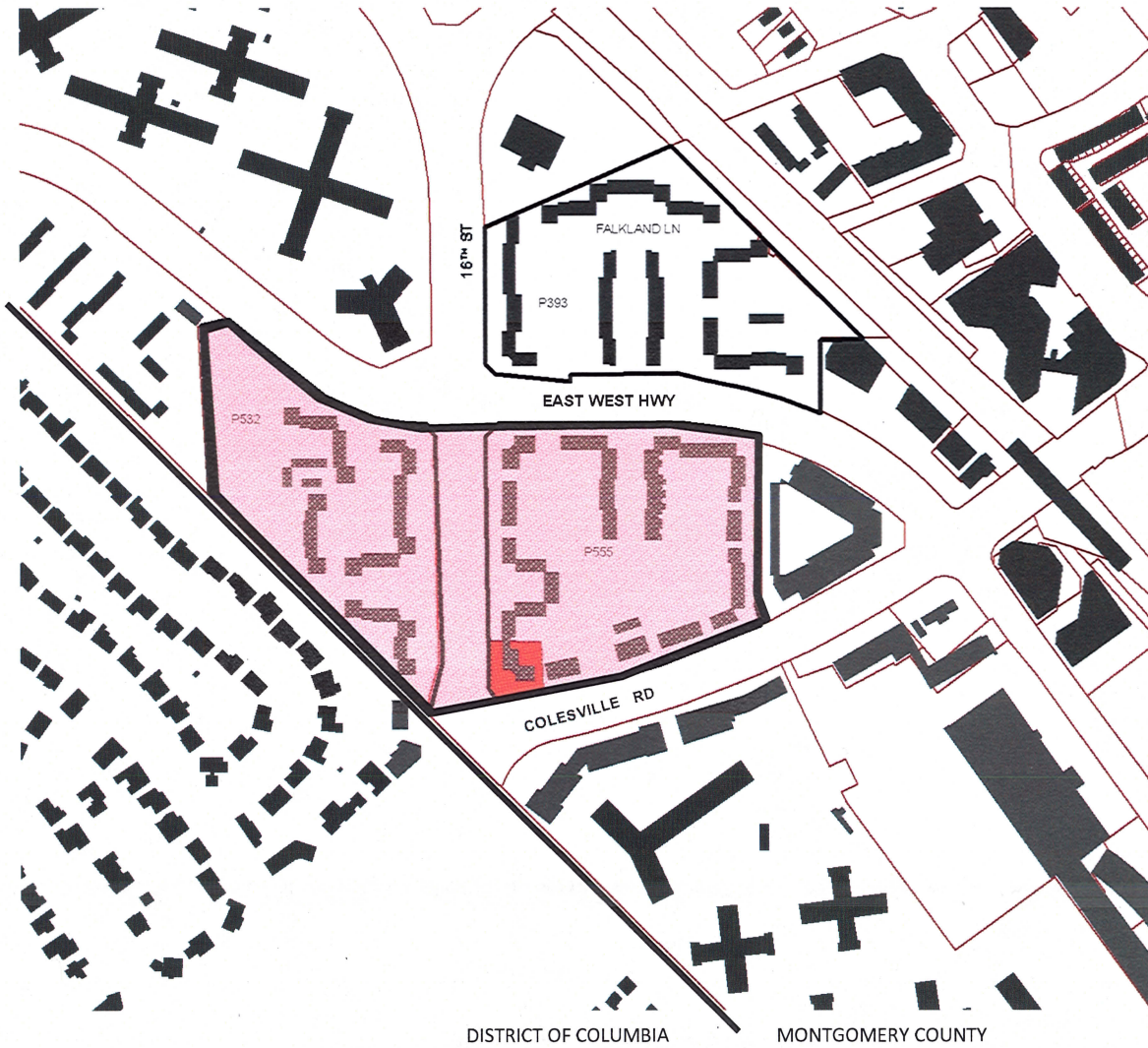




Stream Valley, south parcel

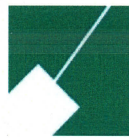


Interior Courtyard

FALKLAND APARTMENTS, #36/12



-  Designate on *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*
-  Cupola Building already designated on *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*



**Planning Board Draft Amendment
to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*:
Falkland Apartments, #36/12**

November 2008

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission



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