

February 1994

\$4.00

GREENBELT



HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

 The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

GREENBELT



HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

■ The Maryland-National Capital Park and
Planning Commission
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

ABSTRACT

TITLE: Greenbelt Historic District Study
AUTHOR: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Howard S. Berger and Robert D. Rivers, Primarily Responsible for this Report
DATE: February 1994
SOURCE OF COPIES: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
SERIES NUMBER: 25594152306
NUMBER OF PAGES: 70

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the findings of a citizens' study committee brought together to explore various methods of recognizing the significance of the planned community known as "Old Greenbelt." The primary work of the study committee was an examination of the pros and cons of local historic district designation as a means of protecting community character. The study area included those portions of the present-day City of Greenbelt currently listed as an Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places. The study committee included representatives of Greenbelt Homes, Inc., private single-family property owners, members of the City of Greenbelt Advisory Planning Board, and representatives of owners of private, multifamily dwellings.

Old Greenbelt is that portion of the present-day City of Greenbelt, designed and constructed as a self-sufficient "new town" between 1935 and 1941, one of three such communities built under the Green Towns Program of the Federal government's Resettlement Administration. Greenbelt is distinguished as the most complete and, more than 50 years later, as the most intact of the Green Towns. As the first American location where the pioneering tenets of the English community planner, Sir Ebenezer Howard, were fully realized, Greenbelt has been the subject of considerable study and served as a model of community planning since before its completion.

This report is divided into five primary sections: the Significance of Greenbelt, Existing Regulatory Framework, Goals and Recommendations, Historic District Implementation, and Recommended Course of Action. The report includes a background history of the design and development of the community and a description of its physical character. It includes summaries of planning and land use policies, regulations and designations currently in place. It also includes potential boundaries for a locally designated historic district and a set of design review guidelines for administering such a district. The report also outlines a recommended course of action for the pursuit of a local historic district. The report is supplemented with photographs, charts and maps.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

John W. Rhoads, Chairman
William H. Hussmann, Vice Chairman

Prince George's County Planning Board

John W. Rhoads, Chairman
Roy I. Dabney, Jr., Vice Chairman
Zola E. Boone
James M. Brown
Regina J. McNeill

Montgomery County Planning Board

William H. Hussmann, Chairman
Nancy M. Floreen, Vice Chairman
Ruthann Aron
Patricia S. Baptiste
Davis M. Richardson

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency, created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties: the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission has three major functions:

- the preparation, adoption, and from time to time amendment or extension of the General Plan for the physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District;
- the acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system; and
- in Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire County public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board, appointed by and responsible to the county government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

The Prince George's County Department of Planning (M-NCPPC):

- Performs technical analyses and offers advice and recommendations regarding most matters related to existing and future...
...use of land including the enhancement of the physical environment, and
...provision of public facilities and services.
- Works on a set of specific projects and tasks annually set forth in a work program and budget adopted by the Prince George's County Council and performs such other tasks in response to emerging issues as resources permit.
- Works under the direction of the Prince George's County Planning Board.
- Is an organization of people that is here to serve people...our elected and appointed officials, our fellow public staffs, and our citizens...individually and/or collectively. The staff will maintain a partnership with people. It will assist and advise you, and will expect your assistance and advice.
- Maintains competent and professionally able staff to perform our duties and responsibilities.

Prince George's County Council

The County Council has three main responsibilities in the planning process: 1) setting policy, 2) plan approval, and 3) plan implementation. Applicable policies are incorporated into area plans, functional plans, and the general plan. The Council, after holding a hearing on the plan adopted by the Planning Board, may approve the plan as adopted, approve the plan with amendments based on the public record, or disapprove the plan and return it to the Planning Board for revision. Implementation is primarily through adoption of the annual Capital Improvement Program, the annual Budget, the Ten-Year Water and Sewerage Plan, and adoption of zoning map amendments.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	3
SIGNIFICANCE OF GREENBELT	7
History	7
The Green Towns Program	7
The Greenbelt Plan	8
Life in Early Greenbelt	9
Community Design and Architecture	11
Community Design	11
Superblocks	11
Road Network	11
Pedestrian Circulation	12
Recreation Areas	12
Surrounding Green Belt	12
Architecture	13
Residential Structures	13
Commercial and Institutional Structures	16
EXISTING REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	23
Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt Master Plan (1989)	23
Greenbelt Homes, Inc.	23
Prince George's County Building Permit Regulations	24
City of Greenbelt Building Permit Requirements	24
National Register of Historic Places	24
Prince George's County Historic Preservation Ordinance	25
Historic Preservation Commission	26
GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	29
Study Committee Goals	29
District Designation and Future Growth	29
Protection of Non-Architectural Community Elements	29
Protection From Outside Influences	29
Regulatory Burden	29
Citizen Participation	30
Design Review Guidelines	30
Recommendations for a Local Historic District	30
Evaluation Criteria	30
Potential Boundaries	31
Noncontiguous Properties	32
Noncontributing Structures	32

HISTORIC DISTRICT IMPLEMENTATION	37
Historic Area Work Permits - Design Review Guidelines	37
General Guidelines	37
Review Process	37
Historic Preservation Commission Review Criteria	38
Secretary of the Interior's Standards	38
Greenbelt Homes, Inc. Green Book Guidelines	38
Local Advisory Committee	38
City of Greenbelt Comment	39
Ordinary Maintenance/Routine Repairs - No HAWP Required	39
Staff Sign-Off	39
Historic Preservation Commission Review	41
Development Referrals	42
Preservation Incentives	42
Prince George's County Preservation Tax Credit	42
Maryland State Income Tax Deduction (502H)	43
CONCLUSION - RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION	47
Interim Methods of Protection and Recognition	47
National Historic Landmark Program	47
Historic Site Designations	48
Educational Programs	48
Preservation and Conservation Easements	48
Historic Road Status	49
GHI Process Adjustment	49
Designation Process	49
APPENDIX A. Property Ownership	53
APPENDIX B: List of Noncontributing Structures	55
APPENDIX C. Historic Preservation Commission Design Review Criteria	56
APPENDIX D: The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation	57
APPENDIX E: Preservation and Conservation Easement Holders in Maryland	58
BIBLIOGRAPHY	60

LIST OF FIGURES - GREENBELT HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

FIGURE 1.	Garden City Plan at Letchworth	8
FIGURE 2:	Pre-Greenbelt Land Use and Ownership	9
FIGURE 3:	Original Greenbelt Plan	10
FIGURE 4:	Gardenside Walkway, Crescent Road	11
FIGURE 5:	Pedestrian Underpass, Crescent Road at Greenbelt Library	12
FIGURE 6:	Brick Homes, Ridge Road at Gardenway	13
FIGURE 7:	Block Homes, Ridge Road at Westway	14
FIGURE 8:	Window Treatments - Original windows at left; replacements at right, Crescent Road at Westway	14
FIGURE 9:	Apartment Blocks, Parkway	15
FIGURE 10:	Parkbelt Homes, Forestway	15
FIGURE 11.	Defense Homes, Southway	16
FIGURE 12:	Roosevelt Center, Centerway	17
FIGURE 13:	Mother and Child Statue, Roosevelt Center	17
FIGURE 14:	Greenbelt Center Elementary School, Crescent Road at Southway	18
FIGURE 15:	Greenbelt Commercial Center	19
FIGURE 16:	Greenbelt Junior High School, Edmonston Road	19
FIGURE 17:	Greenbelt Municipal Cemetery (Turner Family Cemetery), Ivy Lane	26
FIGURE 18:	Potential Greenbelt Historic District Boundaries, July 1993	31
FIGURE 19:	Historic District Design Review Process	38

GREENBELT



HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The Greenbelt Historic District Study project is the result of a request made to the Prince George's County Planning Department by the City of Greenbelt in September 1991. The City of Greenbelt asked the Planning Department to produce a local historic district study for "Old Greenbelt," the area of the City listed as the Greenbelt Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places. As requested, the study would include an examination of potential district boundaries and review guidelines, as well as a discussion of any tax consequences associated with designation, the duties and powers of the County's Historic Preservation Commission, and the role of a Local Advisory Committee in the administration of the potential district. In addition, the City's request included an analysis of alternative methods of recognizing the significance and protecting the character of Old Greenbelt. The Greenbelt Historic District Study was included in the Prince George's County Planning Department Work Program for Fiscal Year 1993.

This report reflects the efforts of a group of citizens brought together as a study committee to explore the advantages and disadvantages of potential local historic district designation for "Old Greenbelt." The committee of volunteers, which included representatives from Greenbelt Homes, Inc., private single-family property owners, members of the City of Greenbelt Advisory Planning Board, and representatives of the owners of multifamily dwellings, met monthly from December 1992 through November 1993 at the Greenbelt City Hall.

The Study Committee discussed various aspects of the Prince George's County Historic Preservation program based on the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Ordinance (Subtitle 29 of the County Code). The Committee reviewed the provisions of the ordinance including the role of the County's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), the evaluation and designation process, the Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) process and staff sign-off mechanism, and the Preservation Tax Credit program as they currently apply to more than 260 individually designated His-

toric Sites and a single Historic District at Broad Creek (Fort Washington). These issues were discussed as they would specifically apply to a potential historic district in Greenbelt.

This report contains a background history on the significance and the architectural and physical character of Old Greenbelt, a discussion of the regulatory framework currently in place regarding construction activity, including local and County permit requirements, and a discussion of existing historic designations. The report also contains a discussion of a locally designated historic district which includes potential boundaries, a discussion of noncontributing buildings, and a set of design review parameters. Finally, the report recommends a course of action to achieve several interim steps toward the full designation of a local historic district.



GREENBELT



HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

Significance of Greenbelt

SIGNIFICANCE OF GREENBELT

Greenbelt is significant as one of three planned communities built through the Federal government's "Green Towns Program" during the Depression. This program was one of the most ambitious and far-reaching New Deal projects initiated by the Roosevelt administration in terms of its scale, expense and comprehensiveness. Of the three towns which were built through this program, Greenbelt is the most fully developed and is also the most intact.

Greenbelt's significance also stems from its status as a model for community planning and design. Inspired by the Garden City Movement and the Radburn Plan, Greenbelt's design was intended to inspire a new lifestyle and sense of community. Emphasizing open space, community interaction and a pedestrian-friendly environment, the design principles used in Greenbelt have been widely imitated in more recent planned communities.

Finally, the architecture of Greenbelt is significant for its consistency with the overall design principles of the community. The modern architectural forms used in Greenbelt were linked to the new planning principles to both inspire and reflect the new way of life envisioned by Greenbelt's designers. The Art Deco style is strongly represented in Greenbelt, as is the influence of the International Style and Streamline Moderne.

History

Greenbelt is one of three "Green Towns" built as part of the New Deal Communities Program during the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The New Deal Communities Program was a response to the deteriorating urban conditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries -- an attempt to create better living environments for the urban poor and working classes through the development of new communities in rural and suburban areas. During the course of the program, over 100 new communities were initiated.

The Green Towns Program

The Green Towns Program was by far the most ambitious of the New Deal Communities Program. It was the brainchild of Rexford Guy Tugwell, who headed the Resettlement Administration, the agency responsible for the New Deal Communities Program. Tugwell, a vocal advocate of planned communities, was fascinated by the promises of the Garden City movement -- a trend in planned community development popularized at the turn of the century by an English planning advocate, Sir Ebenezer Howard. With the publication of *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* in 1902, Howard called for the creation of a new type of living environment as an alternative to the increasingly industrialized urban areas of England. Howard's Garden Cities were to be limited in size by a surrounding belt of open space, to be used as agricultural or recreational space. The cities would center on a commercial and institutional core set in a garden open space. Finally, the cities would be cooperatively owned to promote community values. The two Garden Cities built in England -- Letchworth (1903) and Welwyn (1922) -- were testaments to the success of the idea, and inspired similar efforts elsewhere (see Figure 1).

A second inspiration for Tugwell was the 1927 development of Radburn, New Jersey. Radburn was designed by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, two planners who built upon the Garden City ideal with the establishment of the "neighborhood concept." Among the innovations included at Radburn were: (1) the superblock -- a 40-acre block where vehicular traffic was eliminated; (2) the separation of vehicular and pedestrian circulation through the use of cul-de-sacs, walkways and underpasses; (3) the reconfiguration of housing design so that all service uses were placed on the street-side and all living areas faced interior parks; and (4) the elementary school as the community focal point. Although Radburn was never completed in its entirety, its impact on the community planning field was immense.

With the Green Towns Program, Tugwell envisioned the development of hundreds of

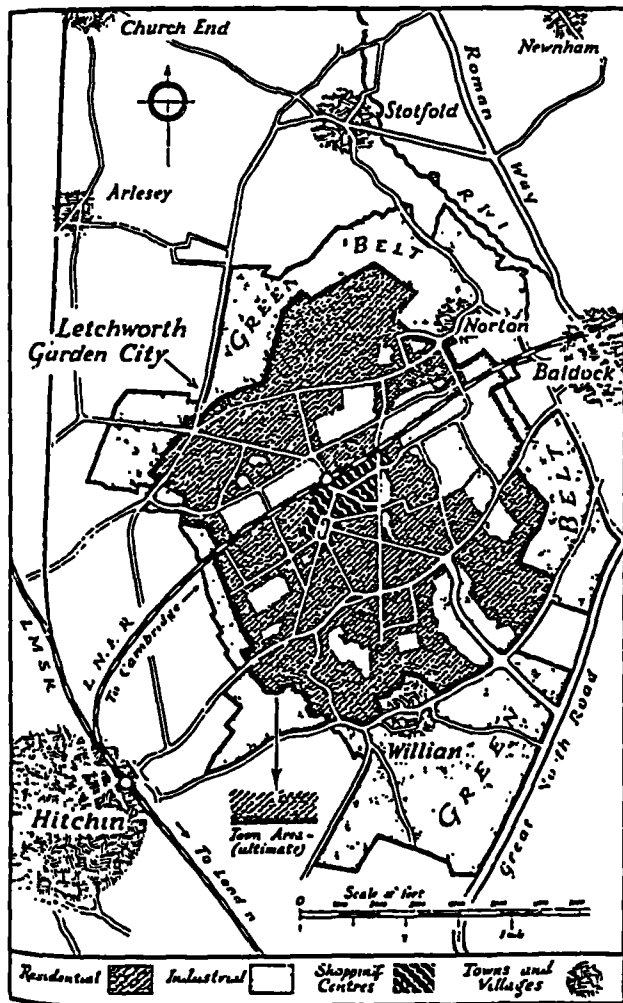


Figure 1 - Garden City Plan at Letchworth

Garden Cities across the country Soon after the Roosevelt Administration took office in 1933, the Suburban Division of the Resettlement Administration began studies of economic and social data from the hundred largest cities in the U.S., 25 of which were selected for initial consideration. Planning began on four of these communities in 1935: Greenbelt, outside Washington, DC, Greenhills, near Cincinnati, Ohio; Greendale, near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Greenbrook, outside New York City in the New Jersey suburbs. Only three communities were built, as the Greenbrook effort was halted by legal problems. The importance placed on the Green Towns was evident by their cost — over 10 million dollars was invested in each of the three built communities. By contrast, none of the other communities developed by the Federal government during the New Deal cost more than \$3.5 million, and the majority were kept under \$1 million.

For both Tugwell and the President, the Green Towns Program was more than just a housing project. Because of the Great Depression, there was little building activity in the country, which resulted in both unemployment and inadequate housing conditions. The Green Towns Program was seen as a way to overcome these problems through work relief, as well as the creation of affordable, decent housing.

The Greenbelt Plan

Greenbelt, Maryland was the first of the Green Towns to begin planning and construction. Because of its proximity to the Nation's Capital, it was a perfect showcase project, especially since some of the biggest opponents to the program were in Congress. Additionally, the Washington area was a rapidly growing region, with a large, moderate-income population. Its importance as the Nation's Capital was also increasing at the time because of the increased importance the country had in world affairs. Finally, the housing conditions of the region were such that rents in the area were relatively much higher when compared to other cities — the demand for affordable housing far exceeded its availability

The Greenbelt location was attractive to the project's planners for several reasons. Despite the rapid growth of suburbia surrounding Washington, the area chosen for Greenbelt was still entirely rural and in agricultural use. Thus, it was inexpensive, and unburdened by existing development which would limit the project's planning and design. Secondly, and possibly more important, was the existence of the Federal government's Agricultural Research Center immediately adjacent to the Greenbelt site. Not only would this provide a source of employment for potential residents, the government already had options on much of the land for possible expansion of the center. In the event that the Greenbelt project failed, the Center was prepared to purchase the land.

Planning for the development began in early 1935. By the time funding was allocated in the fall of that year, the acquisition of the site was already underway. As the government purchased property, all of the existing

structures were razed, and the families who had farmed the land - some for many generations - moved away. The only reminders of the area's agricultural past were several cemeteries - of the Turner, Walker and Hamilton families - which were left undisturbed and remain to this day. Groundbreaking took place on October 12, 1935 (see Figure 2).

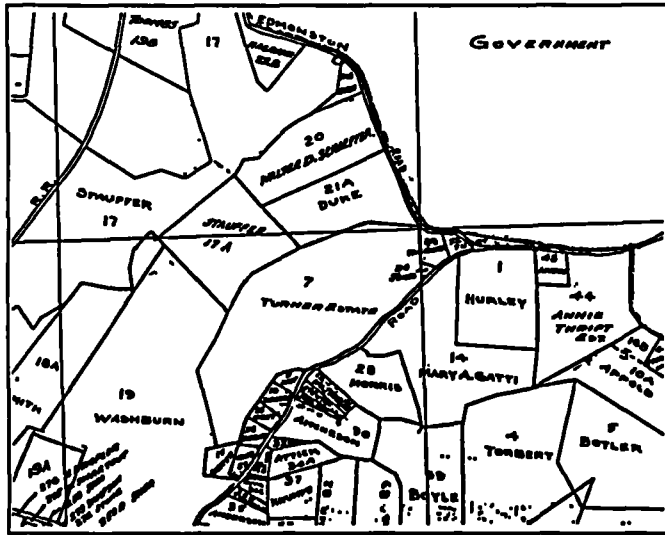


Figure 2 - Pre-Greenbelt Land Use and Ownership

Like each of the Green Towns, Greenbelt, Maryland, had its own project staff of architects, designers and engineers. This was not only to create more employment opportunities, but to encourage the design of communities which were more appropriate to the specifics of the location. For Greenbelt, the project staff was led by Hale Walker, a town planner, Reginald Wadsworth and Douglas Ellington, principal architects, and Harold Bursley, an engineer (see Figure 3).

The design of Greenbelt reflects the general concepts of the Garden City movement and the Radburn development, combined with the topographical and environmental characteristics of the site and the preferences of potential residents, based on extensive survey research. The plan was laid out atop a crescent-shaped plateau, with the two main streets, Ridge and Crescent Roads, following the contour of the crescent. Within the center, or "bowl," of the crescent, the commercial, institutional and recreational facilities were located, so that they would be within walking distance of all of the original dwelling units. The dwellings were located along the main streets, and gener-

ally took the form of rowhouse units and multifamily apartment buildings, reflecting the preference of both designers and potential residents. Like Radburn, the homes were arranged on superblocks, with clearly differentiated "service sides" and "garden sides." All of the homes fronted on open space, and were linked to the rest of the community via a network of pedestrian paths to avoid conflicts with automobiles. In some areas, especially at busy streets, pedestrian underpasses were constructed. The entire development was circled by a "green belt" of open space to limit the extent of development and avoid any adjacent incompatible development.

Initially, 574 rowhouse units were built, along with 306 apartment units and 5 detached houses, meant to be experiments in prefabrication. A private developer was allowed to build 10 additional prefabricated homes within the community, with an option to build hundreds more. The center area featured stores, a theater, an elementary school/community center, government offices, a gas station, and a police/fire station. Also located at the center of the community were the recreational facilities, including a pool, ball fields and a manmade lake. A high school was built on the edge of the community to serve both Greenbelt and the neighboring town of Berwyn Heights. The community and its surrounding green belt comprised over 3,000 acres.

Life in Early Greenbelt

The first residents of Greenbelt were carefully selected by the Resettlement Administration based on their incomes, employment, age, family size and willingness to live up to the ideals of the Greenbelt lifestyle. In theory, the Resettlement Administration wanted to ensure that the initial residents would statistically represent the general population, and at the same time live harmoniously and actively pursue the lifestyle envisioned by the planners. However, because of widespread segregation at the time, blacks were excluded from consideration. The first families began moving into Greenbelt on September 30, 1937. Eventually, of approximately 12,000 families that applied,

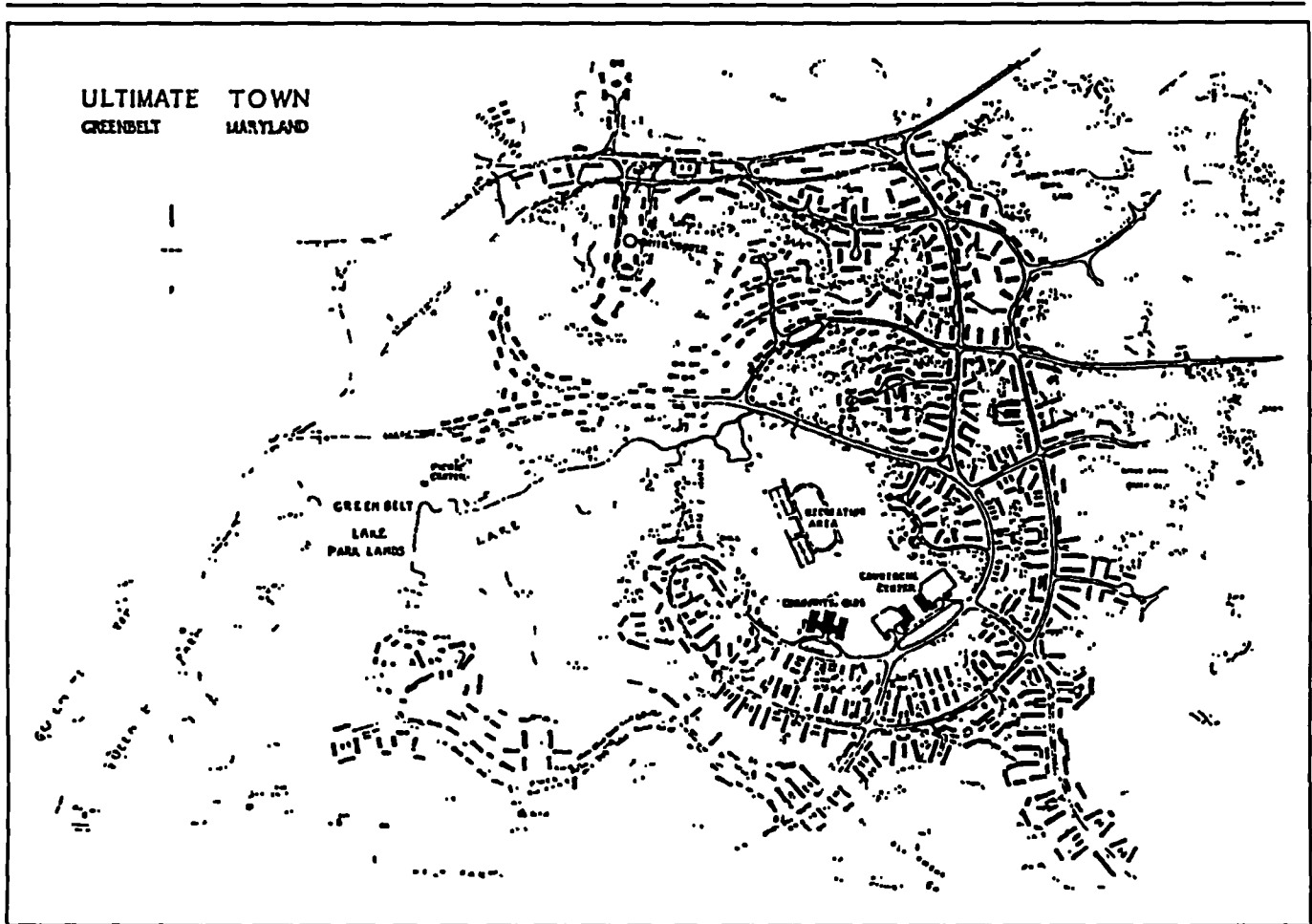


Figure 3 - Original Greenbelt Plan

885 families were selected, creating an initial population of 3,000 residents.

The Maryland State Assembly granted a town charter to Greenbelt on June 1, 1937, making it the first council-manager form of government in the state. In November of that year, the Greenbelt Citizens' Association was formed, providing a public forum for the residents. The most noted form of organization in early Greenbelt, however, was the cooperative. The Greenbelt cooperatives began in September of 1937 as a response to the inability of the Federal government to attract private commercial interests to open stores in the town. In order to provide services, an agreement was reached with the Consumer Distribution Corporation (CDC), a Boston-based cooperative, to establish a cooperative network for Greenbelt. The Greenbelt Consumer Services, Inc., was established as a subsidiary of CDC, with the understanding that it would eventually be taken over by the residents. The first cooperative venture, a grocery store, was opened by

December of 1937. Eventually, a larger grocery store, a theater and a gas station were opened, as well as several other specialty stores – all under the guidance of Greenbelt Consumer Services, Inc. The early residents of Greenbelt were generally considered to be very community-oriented. In addition to the cooperatives, the residents organized their own newspaper, transportation, social and recreational groups, and kindergarten – the first in Prince George's County.

In 1941, Greenbelt was selected by the Farm Security Administration as one of 43 sites nationwide to provide housing for the country's escalating military activity. This "Defense Housing" was authorized under the Lanham Housing Act of 1941. Eventually, 1,000 units were built on the edges of the original Greenbelt development to house military personnel and employees of the Navy and War departments. The impact on Greenbelt was tremendous. The number of housing units in Greenbelt more than doubled, yet initially no

new services were planned. Because of the increase in population, the schools had to resort to double shifts, while stores and recreational facilities could not handle the demand. Eventually, a makeshift store, school and day care facility were all established in vacant housing units until more permanent facilities could be built. A fear at the time was that the generally older military population would not get along with the existing younger residents and would refuse to cooperate with the community-oriented lifestyle. This proved not to be the case as the defense housing residents actively participated in Greenbelt activities.

As early as 1942, when the Federal government announced that the Farm Security Administration's communities programs would be discontinued, it was clear that Greenbelt was to be sold by the Federal government. After World War II, the Federal government began negotiations with local officials about the disposition of the town. When the local government decided not to pursue the purchase, a group of residents got together in 1947 to form the Greenbelt Mutual Home Owners Association, later called the Greenbelt Veterans Housing Corporation (GVHC). Eventually, GVHC negotiated the purchase of the majority of the residential component of Greenbelt, leaving the commercial facilities, recreational facilities, public utilities and nearly 850 acres of open space, including the green belt, for sale to private interests and the local government. A housing cooperative was established, with each resident owning a share in GVHC. By 1957, GVHC had changed its name to Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

Community Design and Architecture

Community Design

The design of Greenbelt was influenced primarily by the planning concepts established through the Garden City movement and the later development of Radburn, New Jersey. The unified plan which resulted held as its most important goal the safe and healthful lifestyle of the residents.

Superblocks

A direct influence of the Radburn development was the concept of the superblock. At Greenbelt, the community was laid out in a series of superblocks, which were from 14 to 18 acres in size, and contained about 120 homes each. Within each superblock, homes were arranged in clusters of rows, creating "service sides" -- the side of the row which provided access to the street and deliveries -- and "garden sides" -- which opened onto a system of gardens and walkways or woodlands (see Figure 4). Through the creation of superblocks, more land was free for open space and recreational uses, while the impact of the automobile was minimized.

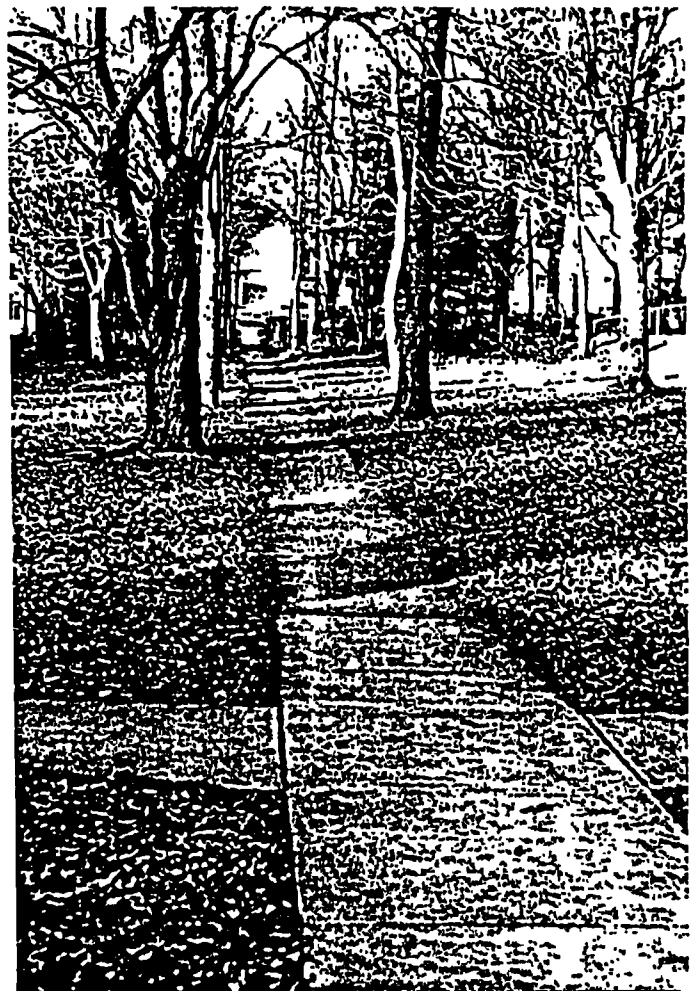


Figure 4 Gardenside Walkway, Crescent Road

Road Network

A main goal of the Greenbelt planners was to keep roads to a minimum. When the project was first announced, a team of engineers

devised a plan with a geometric grid pattern and 66 miles of streets. After being revised by the town planners, there was a total of six miles of streets. The main roads in Greenbelt -- Ridge and Crescent Roads -- were aligned to follow the contour of an existing curved plateau, with secondary roads designed to extend in each direction (Southway, Eastway, etc.) or to specific locations, like the community gardens (Gardenway). A service road was built at the commercial center (Centerway) in order to keep the pedestrian activity at the center away from the busier Crescent Road. In general, the road system in Greenbelt was designed to minimize the impact of the automobile in this residential, pedestrian-oriented community, fulfilling the ideals of the Radburn development.

Pedestrian Circulation

As an extension of the design of the road system, the pedestrian circulation system in Greenbelt was designed to minimize conflicts between automobiles and pedestrians. A system of pathways runs through most of the internal parks, along the "garden sides" of the residences, connecting the units to the remainder of the community. The system enables most residents to walk from their homes to any of the other main elements of Greenbelt, such as the commercial center, recreational facilities and schools. At some places, underpasses were built, allowing pedestrians to pass beneath major roads. Additionally, the layout of the community, with nearly all of the community-oriented uses concentrated at the center, encouraged residents to walk through the community, rather than drive (see Figure 5).

Recreation Areas

As a way to facilitate a healthful way of life, the Greenbelt planners provided a large amount of recreational opportunities for the community. In addition

to the internal open space found in the superblocks, the community's design also included a number of recreational facilities immediately behind the commercial center. This included a number of playing fields and an extremely popular outdoor swimming pool. A major recreational feature of the community was Greenbelt Lake, which actually served a dual function. In addition to providing boating, fishing and (initially) swimming opportunities, it also served to eliminate an unusable swamp area.

Surrounding Green Belt

The most direct link to the Garden City concept is the "green belt" which originally surrounded the community, and for which the town was named. The green belt, or surrounding belt of open space, was intended to limit the expanse of Greenbelt and to eliminate the threat of incompatible adjacent development. In addition, it was thought that the open space could provide additional space for recreational uses and gardening. Although the original green belt included approximately 2,500 acres, subsequent development and highway construction has reduced it significantly on the eastern side of Old Greenbelt. In addition, just to the south of the community, the Greenbelt National Park preserved more open space in that direction.



Figure 5 - Pedestrian Underpass, Crescent Road at Greenbelt Library

Architecture

The architecture of Greenbelt reflects the intent of the designers to create a new type of living environment in the planned community. All of the designed elements of Greenbelt, both architectural and planning-related, were meant to reflect a progressive lifestyle and a break from past methods of community development. The designers avoided traditional architectural styles in favor of those more reflective of the growing trend toward modernity in architecture. Such modern stylistic movements as Art Deco, Streamline Moderne and Bauhaus strongly influenced the simplified architectural forms designed for Greenbelt. The specific "modern" architectural character of the structures set within a "planned" environment was an important element in the overall design of Greenbelt. These features remain vital to its integrity and historic importance.

Residential Structures

Most structures in Old Greenbelt are residential. The predominant building type in the original development was the rowhouse block. Two types of rowhouses were built, in blocks of two to eight units, reflecting the various levels of skilled workers involved in the construction: frame structures with brick veneer and slate covered gable roofs, known commonly as the "brick homes," and built by skilled workers (see Figure 6); and concrete block structures with flat roofs, known as the "block homes," which were built by less-skilled workers (see Figure 7). Both types feature ornamental brickwork around the windows, and were originally painted either white with green trim, or in a pastel color. Most units are two stories in height, al-

though 16 one-story, one bedroom units, known as "honeymoon cottages," were built at the end of some of the blocks to accommodate couples with no children. For larger families, 22 units were built with walkout basements. While the exterior of the rowhouses were of uniform design, the interiors varied to accommodate individual family needs. Seventy-one different floorplans were offered, with unit sizes varying from one to three bedrooms.

Over the years, the original uniform design of the rowhouses has been lessened because of additions and alterations. Additionally, the majority of the units have had their original metal casement windows replaced with vinyl sash windows in a comprehensive rehabilitation effort in the early 1980s. Despite these changes, however, much of the community's original character remains intact (see Figure 8).

The second main housing type in the original development was the apartment block. Originally, 306 apartment units were built in 12, three-story buildings. Each of the buildings was constructed of cinderblock with ornamental glass block at the entryways (see Figure 9). The building sizes ranged from 18 to 48 units per building. Like the rowhouses, some of the apartment buildings have had window replacements (those owned by GHI). Additionally, some of the exterior porches have been enclosed to enlarge those units.



Figure 6 Brick Homes, Ridge Road at Gardenway



Figure 7 - Block Homes, Ridge Road at Gardenway



Figure 8 - Window Treatments - Original windows at left; replacements at right, Crescent Road at Westway



Figure 9 - Apartment Blocks, Parkway

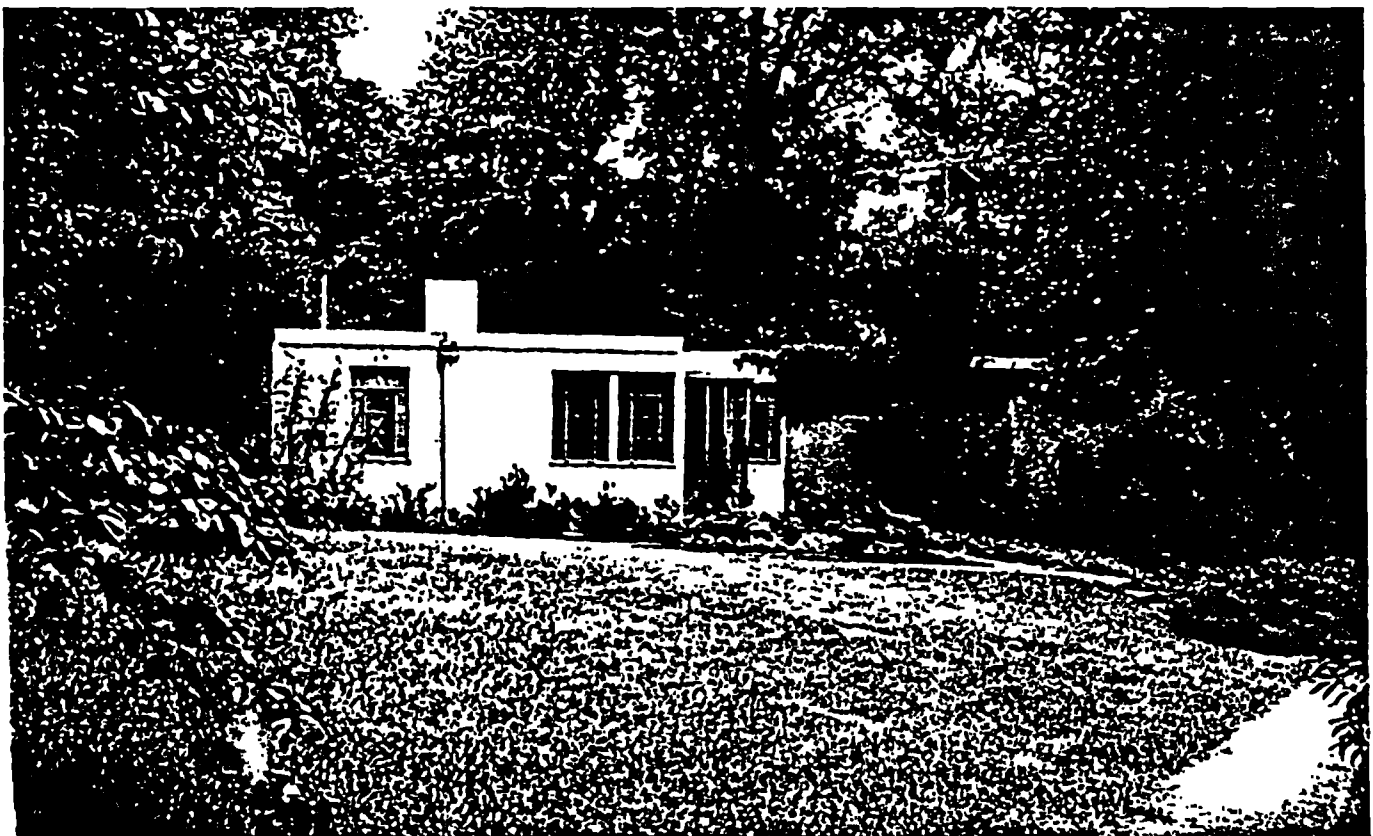


Figure 10 - Parkbelt Homes, Forestway

The final housing type built by the Federal government during the initial development was an experimental effort in prefabricated housing. Five detached units were built in the northern part of the City as part of this effort. Each unit was one story, with two bedrooms, and ranged in size from 716 to 999 square feet of floor area. The construction process included the innovative use of plywood as a structural element. Additionally, much of the assembly was done off-site, reducing construction costs.

Another experiment in prefabrication was undertaken at the time by a private developer. Ten detached units, known as the "Parkbelt Homes," were built on Forestway by the Fisher Brothers contractors. The one-story homes were a prototype developed by General Houses of Chicago, a noted pioneer in prefabricated housing at the time (see Figure 10). The units featured copper-bearing steel frames, with factory-made panels as walls, and concrete foundations. Each unit was placed on a 1/3-acre plot. An agreement with the government gave the contractors the option to develop an additional 200 units on Greenbelt property. This effort was seen as a way for the government to get out of the homebuilding business at a time when Congress was becoming more skeptical about continued funding of the Greenbelt effort. Ten families moved into the units in March of 1938, with each owning shares in Parkbelt Homes, Inc., a cooperative established for the residents of the homes. The developer hired someone to monitor the buildings for any structural problems. Today most of the units have been altered beyond recognition, however, two units still retain much of their original integrity.

In 1941, as the nation was preparing itself for the inevitability of war, the Federal Works Agency, working with

the Farm Security Administration, built 1,000 new homes in Greenbelt under the provisions of the Lanham Housing Act. Known as the "Defense Homes," these units were built on 217 acres of land, mostly on the edges of Old Greenbelt. Built to house employees of the Navy and War departments, this effort was one of 43 defense-related housing developments built as a result of the Lanham Act. The Defense Homes were similar in plan to the rest of the Greenbelt rowhouses, but were of frame construction, with asbestos shingle siding. Because of the scarcity of materials and the speed with which the units were constructed, they were of inferior quality when compared to the original Greenbelt Homes. Additionally, some of the amenities associated with the original homes were not provided for the Defense Homes, such as garages, inner walkways and pedestrian underpasses (see Figure 11).

Commercial and Institutional Structures

The plan for Greenbelt held to the concepts of the Garden City and Radburn plans by concentrating the commercial and institutional uses in the center of the community, where they would be easily accessible to the greatest number of residents. The main feature of this central element was the Commercial Center,



Figure 11 - Defense Homes, Southway

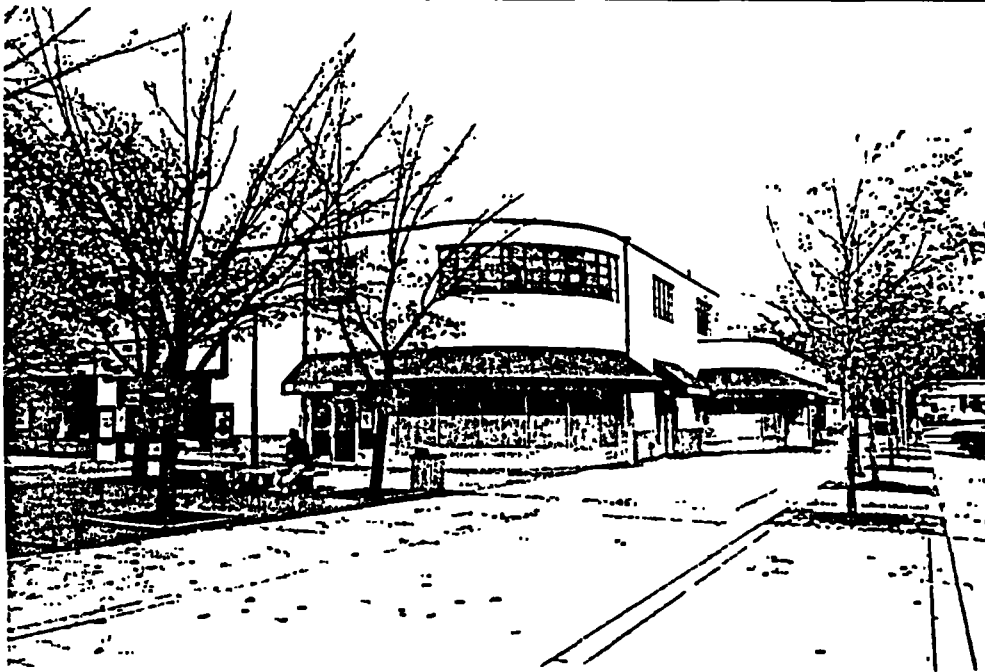


Figure 12 - Roosevelt Center, Centerway

located just to the south of the Commercial Center, was originally built to serve a dual role, as an elementary school and a community center. Like the Commercial Center, the Center School is noted for its architectural expression, with streamlined buttresses and large windows. Its facade is further adorned with a series of bas-relief sculptures, depicting the preamble to the U.S. Constitution, which were also sculpted by Lenore Thomas. It is the only structure in the study area which is individually

later known as the Roosevelt Center. The Commercial Center was intended not only as a place for shops, but as a community focal point and gathering place, encouraging a sense of community involvement. The two buildings (107 and 131 Centerway) which originally made up the Center are two stories in height and designed to reflect a strong influence of the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles, with curved corners, strip windows and an emphasis on horizontality (see Figure 12). A theater located at the rear of one of the buildings reinforced the design with its streamlined buttresses and neon marquee, which has since been removed. The two buildings flank an open plaza area, which at one end features a mother-and-child statue sculpted by Lenore Thomas, a noted WPA artist from Accokeek, Maryland (see Figure 13). In addition to the theater, the Center has, over the years, housed a grocery store, numerous specialty stores, government offices, and the post office. A small, one-story addition was added to one of the buildings in 1947 to house a tenant-selection office. The Center was recently renovated and houses a number of stores, restaurants and private offices, as well as a bank and a theater.

The second major feature of the commercial/institutional core was the Greenbelt Center School (17 Crescent Road). This building,



Figure 13 - Mother and Child Statue, Roosevelt Center

listed as a County Historic Site #67-4-1 (see Figure 14).

Several other structures remain in the center area which date to the original development of Greenbelt. The former police and fire station (151 Centerway) is located just to the northeast of the Commercial Center. This small, one-story structure is constructed of concrete block and is detailed in a similar fashion as the rowhouse units. It has been converted for commercial use and now houses a video store. The poolhouse (99 Centerway) is located directly behind the Commercial Center, and originally featured a central Art Deco entry vestibule made of brick, with flanking dressing areas built of wood. Recent construction of a new swimming complex on an adjacent site has resulted in the demolition of the dressing areas. The center portion will be incorporated as a wing to the new complex. Finally, the original Co-op Gas Station (161 Centerway) is located northeast of the police/fire station at the corner of Centerway

and Crescent Roads; it has undergone major alterations as a result of its conversion to a Mobil station (see Figure 15).

Two other schools were built outside of the center area. The Greenbelt High School was completed in 1937 and was originally used as both a junior and senior high school. It was located on the edge of Old Greenbelt on Edmonston Road, and was meant to serve students from both Greenbelt and the neighboring town of Berwyn Heights. It is now used as the Greenbelt Middle School and is one of the noncontiguous properties included in the study area (see Figure 16). The North End School was built in response to the increased population caused by the defense housing. Completed in 1945, it was recently demolished to make way for a new elementary school completed in 1993.



Figure 14 - Greenbelt Center Elementary School, Crescent Road at Southway

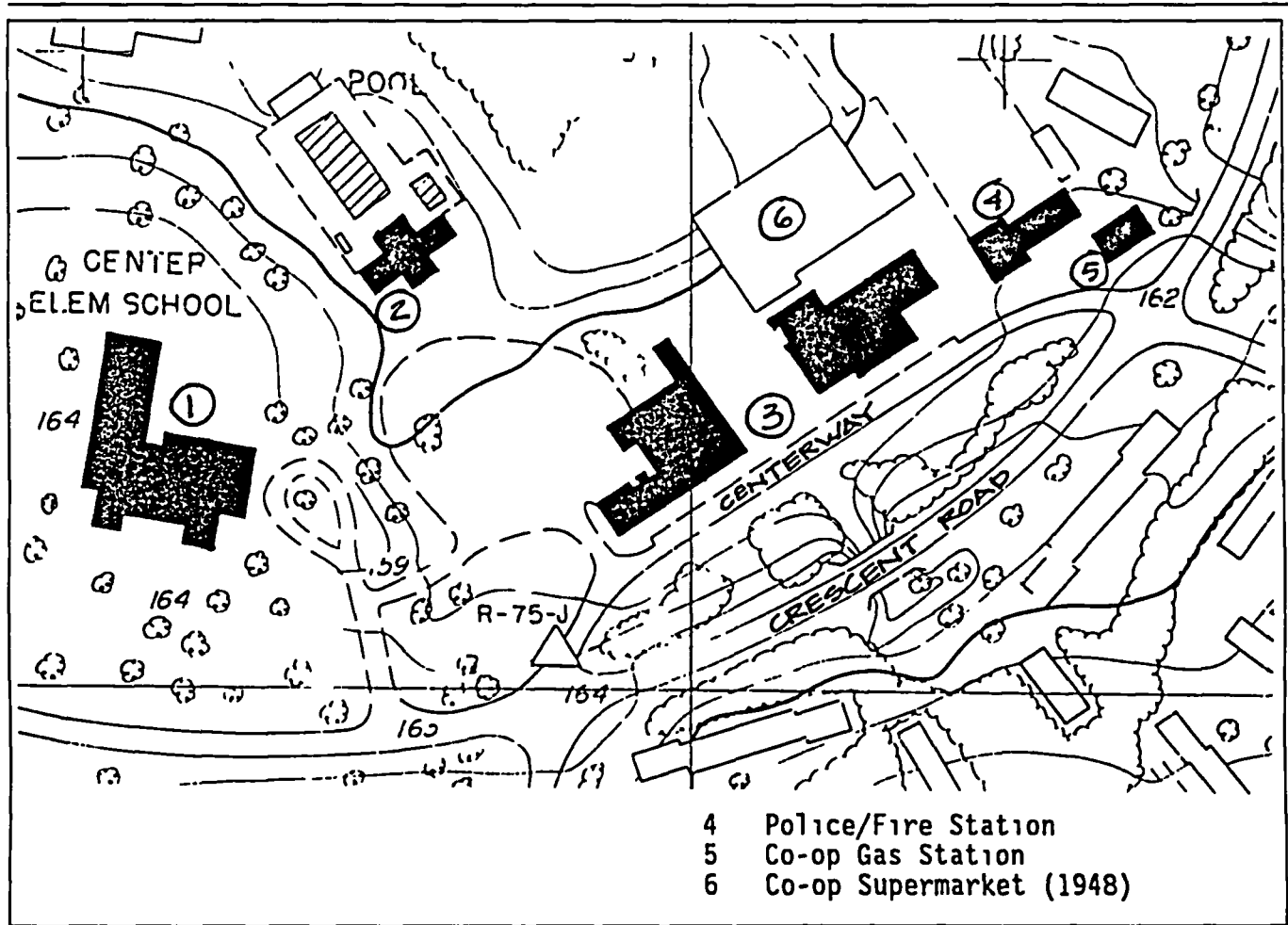


Figure 15 Greenbelt Commercial Center

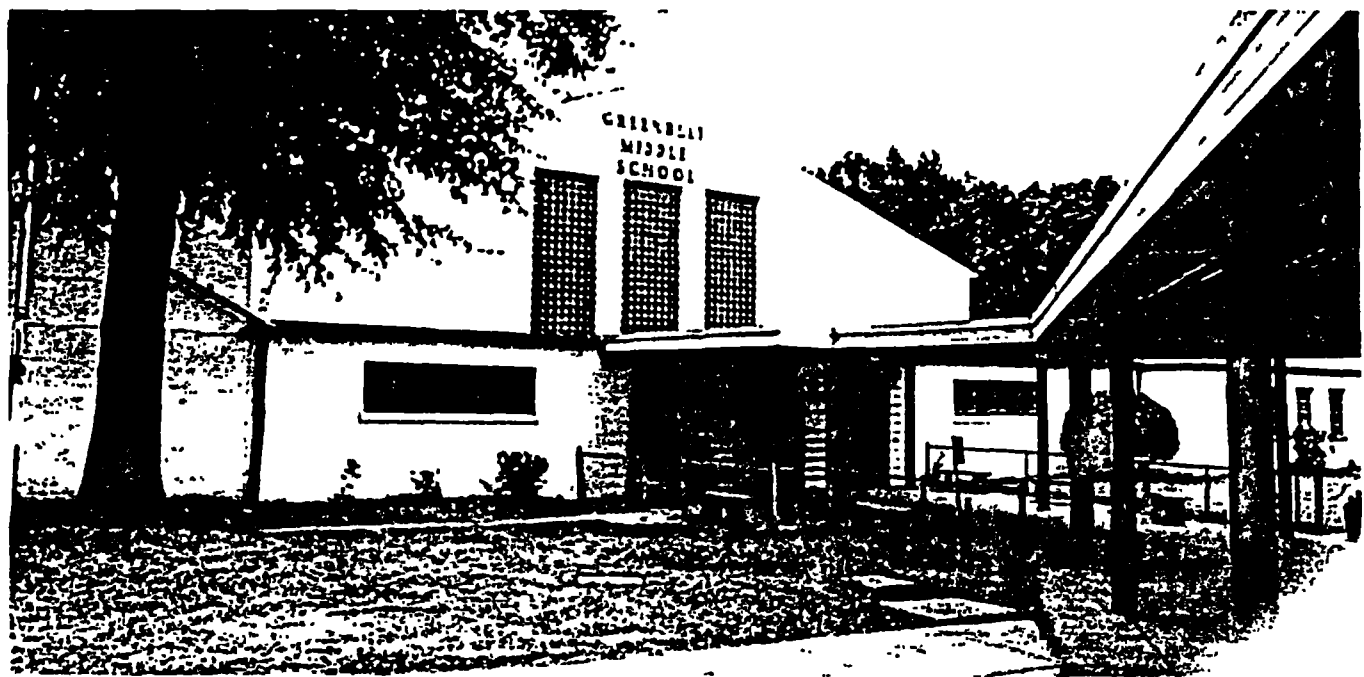


Figure 16 - Greenbelt Middle School (formerly Greenbelt High School) Edmonston Road

GREENBELT



HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

Existing Regulatory Framework

EXISTING REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Although Greenbelt is an incorporated municipality, the establishment and administration of zoning and land use regulations, public education and the provision of public utilities rests with the County government, or with a local or regional authority as outlined in the Regional District Act. The City of Greenbelt does maintain an Advisory Planning Board to review issues and make recommendations to the City Council which in turn makes recommendations to the County Council regarding planning and zoning issues. All property owners within Old Greenbelt are required to follow applicable City, County and State codes.

Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt Master Plan (1989)

The *Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* is the approved comprehensive plan which includes Old Greenbelt. Approved in 1989 (the Sectional Map Amendment was adopted in 1990), the document prescribes the land use, zoning, transportation, and public facilities plans for the area. Specifically, the Plan includes several provisions which directly affect the study area. The Plan incorporates all Old Greenbelt into the R-P-C (Residential Planned Community) Zone. As a reflection of existing conditions, the R-P-C Zone provides for a combination of uses to promote a large-scale and complete community development (for at least 500 people) and encourages recreational, commercial, institutional and employment facilities within a planned community.

In Old Greenbelt there is an "Official Plan for the Greenbelt R-P-C Zone." This official plan is generally consistent with the existing land uses in Old Greenbelt. An exception involves the northern portion of the Greenbelt woods at the northeast corner of the study area. This area is designated as "Low Suburban Residential" rather than "Open Space." While the projected use for this area is to be open space, the exact form of open space (e.g.,

woodlands, playing fields, etc.) has not yet been determined.

Two transportation-related recommendations in the Master Plan could also affect Old Greenbelt. The Plan proposes that Crescent Road be realigned between Kenilworth Avenue and Lastner Lane, so that it aligns with Ivy Lane. Additionally, it recommends that Ridge Road be extended to connect with Cherrywood Lane at Kenilworth Avenue. At the same time, the Plan eliminates the possibility that a previously planned "Greenbelt perimeter road" would be built, which would extend Ridge Road over the Baltimore-Washington Parkway to the east.

Some community residents expressed fears that the two proposed road improvements would encourage through traffic in Old Greenbelt. However, during the public hearing phase of the Plan, planners from the M-NCPPC Transportation and Public Facilities Planning Division produced traffic models demonstrating that this would not be the case. The improvements are classified as "collectors," which would equate to a right-of-way width of 80 feet and 4 lanes of paved surface.

Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

Greenbelt Homes, Inc. (GHI), represents the interest of 1,600 shareholders and is the largest single property owner within Old Greenbelt and the National Register Historic District. (For a list of other private property owners within the potential Historic District, see Appendix A). The cooperative has a well developed internal management system that includes a Board of Directors, a series of task-specific subcommittees, and the GHI *Green Book* which delineates the responsibilities and limitations of property ownership within the cooperative. Within GHI, when architectural changes like fences, decks, sheds and additions or alterations are proposed to any unit or its grounds, those changes are reviewed for conformance with co-op established guidelines. Initially, projects are reviewed by GHI technical staff. If a project

conforms to guidelines, approval is granted by GHI and the project can proceed to the County government, if necessary, for review and permit issuance. Should the proposal not conform to adopted guidelines, it is forwarded to the Architecture and Environment Committee, a subcommittee of the Board of Directors.

The Architecture and Environment (A & E) Committee meets on a monthly basis to review those items forwarded by GHI staff. Most frequently the Committee seeks to shape a proposal to more readily conform to guidelines or to mitigate departures from established standards. The A & E Committee's recommendations concerning a project are forwarded to the Board of Directors for a final decision.

Prince George's County Building Permit Regulations

All property owners within Old Greenbelt are subject to the building codes and zoning and land use regulations of Prince George's County. Typically, property owners are required to obtain appropriate permits for fences above a certain height, plumbing and electrical work, additions above a certain size and exterior alterations which also involve structural changes. Permits may be obtained by a licensed contractor or in some instances, the homeowner or the homeowner's agent. When a project has been approved by GHI, it can proceed to the County level for review. Property owners outside GHI deal directly with the County's Department of Environmental Resources to obtain necessary approvals and permits.

City of Greenbelt Building Permit Requirements

The City of Greenbelt has recently instituted an ordinance mandating the issuance of a City building permit for all projects requiring Prince George's County building permits. In order to receive a City permit, all necessary County permits must be in hand. In the City's review process, applications and plans will be

reviewed for compliance with local codes, standards and specifications. Plans conforming to applicable requirements will be approved subject to the payment of appropriate fees. Complete permits may be walked through on a designated day or by appointment. The fee schedule for City of Greenbelt building permits includes a flat fee plus an additional amount based on the value of the work.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is a list of properties acknowledged by the Federal government as worthy of recognition and preservation. Authorized by the National Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register program is maintained by the Secretary of the Interior and administered by the National Park Service. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that are significant to their local community, state or the nation. These resources contribute to an understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation.

The portion of the present-day City of Greenbelt developed as a planned Greentown by the Resettlement Administration was listed as an Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places in November 1980. The boundaries of the district were drawn to include those areas of the City directly related to the establishment and expansion of the planned community between 1935 and 1941. The Greenbelt National Register Historic District includes almost 800 acres of land containing the original townhouse, multifamily and single-family residential units, the commercial, educational and recreational buildings at the center of the community and the remaining portion of the original "green belt" at the northeast edge of the City.

For the property owner, there are no regulatory restrictions, limitations or requirements for properties listed in the National Register Historic District. Listing in the National Register does not preclude the alteration, sale or

demolition of all or part of a designated resource. A property owner retains full use of a Register-listed property

At the same time, once a property has been listed in the National Register (or in some cases deemed eligible for listing), the Federal government agrees to extend certain protection to that property regarding potentially adverse actions the Federal government might take. If the Federal government were involved on a public works project, or the funding or approval of one, that project would be reviewed by the Federal government for its potential effect of the historic character and the integrity of the Register-listed resource. The Federal government's review is known as the "Section 106" process, after the portion of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 that outlines it.

In the State of Maryland, listing in the National Register enables property owners to take advantage of a State income tax deduction for the restoration or rehabilitation of historic property. Using Form 502H, the deduction may represent up to 100 percent of the approved value of a project. For more information about this program see page 43.

Prince George's County Historic Preservation Ordinance

Listing in the National Register does not preclude additional forms of historic designation. A National Register property may also be designated on the County level. Most frequently it is the local designation of a property under an historic preservation ordinance that establishes certain restrictions concerning its alteration or demolition.

Prince George's County passed an Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1981 (Subtitle 29 of the County Code). The Ordinance implemented the 1981 *Historic Sites and Districts Plan*, a master plan for preservation activity on a Countywide basis. The Ordinance provided for the establishment of an Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with responsibilities to: (1) designate Historic Sites and Historic

Districts; (2) approve or deny Historic Area Work Permits and Preservation Tax Credits; and (3) make recommendations of planning referrals.

As a functional plan amendment of the *General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District within Prince George's County, Maryland*, the *Historic Sites and Districts Plan* is to be periodically amended and updated to reflect the actions of the Historic Preservation Commission, to reflect changes in the County's historic preservation program, and to provide an updated Inventory of Historic Resources. The *Historic Sites and Districts Plan* was last amended in 1992.

The County Ordinance specifies two types of designations for historic properties: *historic resource* and *historic site*. An historic resource is an historic property listed in the County Inventory of Historic Resources. An historic resource is "an area of land, building, structure, or object, or a group or combination thereof, including appurtenances and environmental setting which may be significant in national, state or local history, architecture, archeology, or culture." An historic resource receives limited protection through the Preservation Ordinance pending documentation and evaluation by the Historic Preservation Commission and its designation or deletion from the County Inventory. The terms *Historic Site* and *Historic District* are used for those individual historic resources or groups of resources that have been evaluated by the Historic Preservation Commission and found to be significant according to procedures and criteria specified in the Ordinance. An Historic Site is then protected by the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Currently, only four properties associated with Old Greenbelt are regulated by the County Preservation Ordinance. The four properties are the Walker, Hamilton and Turner family cemeteries (see Figure 17) and the Greenbelt Center School. The three cemeteries were listed as *historic resources* in the original *Historic Sites and Districts Plan*. The Greenbelt Center School was designated as a Prince George's County Historic Site by the County Council in 1984. The three cemeteries remain historic resources and receive only

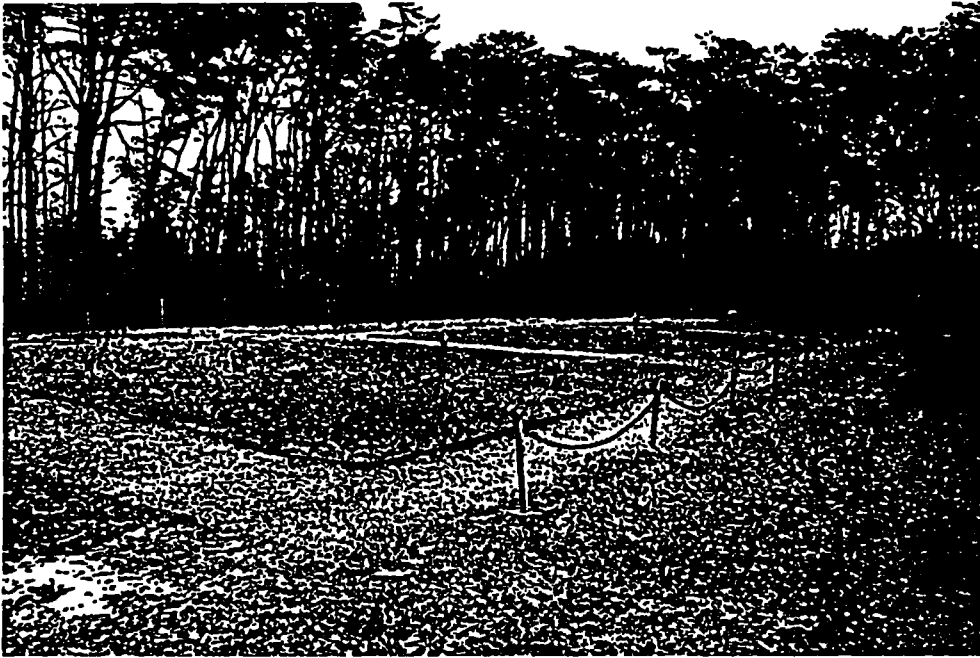


Figure 17 - Greenbelt Municipal Cemetery (Turner Family Cemetery), Ivy Lane

limited protection provided by the Ordinance, unless they are evaluated by the Historic Preservation Commission.¹

Historic Preservation Commission

The County Executive appoints nine citizens to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) from a range of fields and interests reflecting the diversity of concerns common to preservation issues. Historic Preservation Commissioners represent the Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Realtors, the Suburban Maryland Building Industry Association, the Municipal Association, the Farm Bureau, the Prince George's Historical & Cultural Trust, as well as the fields of Architecture, History and Preservation. The Commissioners serve without compensation. Staff support is provided by the Historic Preservation Section of the Prince George's County Planning Department.

Through the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Historic Preservation Commission has the power to evaluate and designate Historic Sites and Historic Districts, grant or deny Historic Area Work Permits (HAWP), and grant or deny preservation tax credit applications. The HPC also reviews and comments on zoning and subdivision cases affecting historic resources, delineates environmental settings, and appoints local advisory committees. The HPC may also review

and make recommendations on legislation and master plans, maintain an Inventory of Historic Resources, and serve as a clearinghouse for information on historic preservation.

The HPC uses established criteria and Rules of Procedure (approved by the County Council) to govern the processing of Historic Site and District evaluations, Historic Area Work Permits, Preservation Tax Credits and other aspects of its work. The evaluation of applications for Historic Site and Historic District designation are based on a set of criteria describing the historic, architectural or cultural significance of a property. Similarly, Historic Area Work Permits and Preservation Tax Credit applications are reviewed against criteria designed to measure the impact and compatibility a permit application has on the historic character of a resource.

¹ The Hamilton family cemetery is located within the remaining portion of the original green belt east of Southway and west of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. It is part of the largest parcel in the National Register District.

GREENBELT



HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

Goals And Recommendations



GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Study Committee Goals

Throughout the course of the study, the Study Committee examined numerous issues related to the potential designation of a local historic district in Greenbelt. The recommendations included in this report are based upon a careful consideration of these issues conducted with the diverse interests and concerns of the Greenbelt community in mind. Discussions were thoughtful and wide-ranging; presentations were made by M-NCPPC Historic Preservation Section staff, the technical staff of GHI, the County's Office of Finance, and the State Department of Assessment and Taxation.

Discussion was consistently focused on certain pivotal issues including: the extent to which a local historic district would enable the community to accommodate growth and the changing needs of current and future residents; the use and protection of open space; the impact of historic district designation on externally generated issues such as traffic levels and road improvements and incompatible adjacent development; the potential burden of additional regulations on homeowners; and the role residents would play in the regulation of their community. The following is a summary of the major points of discussion which formed the basis for the Committee's recommendations.

District Designation and Future Growth

Committee members felt that any potential historic district should be implemented in a way that recognizes both the historical and architectural significance of Greenbelt and the specific needs of individual property owners. Particular concern was expressed regarding the need to preserve the historic arrangement of the community while enabling property owners to enjoy substantial freedoms to improve and enlarge their homes. The intent of the designation should not be to freeze Greenbelt in time but to sensitively manage its growth.

Protection of Non-Architectural Community Elements

Recognizing that local historic districts traditionally focus on architectural review, committee members emphasized that the significance of Greenbelt is found not only in its architecture, but also in its unique physical expression as a planned community. The Greenbelt Historic District should provide equal protection for the non-architectural aspects of the community. A specific example of this sentiment was the desire for the potential district to serve as the basis for keeping the remaining green belt as wooded open space and present road alignments and profiles.

Protection From Outside Influences

The Committee felt that the potential district should serve to protect the community from adverse impacts initiated by forces outside of the district's boundaries. In particular, concerns were expressed regarding incompatible adjacent development which could affect the low-rise, residential character of Old Greenbelt. The effects of planned road improvements were also of substantial concern. Proposals to upgrade access roads at the north end of the community were perceived by the Committee as potentials for increasing through traffic and therefore, a serious threat to Greenbelt's pedestrian-oriented environment. The Committee felt that historic district designation would serve as an effective basis for recommending that such improvements, if necessary, are undertaken in a manner compatible with the community's historic character.

Regulatory Burden

The Committee recognized that additional regulations might be perceived as an undue burden to property owners. The implementation of the historic district should be aimed at the most serious threats to its character; minor work should be expeditiously handled, while

major issues should be more carefully considered. The community should benefit from a potential historic district, not be burdened by it.

Citizen Participation

Strong sentiment was voiced for the administration of the potential district to be predicated on active input from the community. The role of a Local Advisory Committee (LAC) should be a substantial and persuasive one. The LAC should strive to represent all of the various interests affected by the designation, and be an active partner with the Historic Preservation Commission in the resolution of issues.

Design Review Guidelines

The Committee felt strongly that design review parameters should be part of this report and any historic district designation effort. The review would provide a unified set of standards by which all projects would be reviewed and publicize any changes in existing permitting processes posed by potential historic district designation. The parameters included in this report have been carefully coordinated with existing GHI guidelines and the Policies and Procedures of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Recommendations for a Local Historic District

The following recommendations are based on discussions during a number of meetings conducted by the Study Committee. These recommendations should be taken as the consensus opinions of the Committee, and that while the opinions of individual members may vary slightly, there was general agreement on the recommendations that follow.

The Study Committee determined that there was substantial justification for the establishment of the locally designated Historic District as a means of protecting and enhancing the architectural and historical significance of Old Greenbelt. The history of Old Greenbelt as an

important 20th-century urban planning model, together with its largely intact condition more than 50 years after completion, are a testimony to the success of the ideas embodied in the planned community. Further, there is value in ensuring that Old Greenbelt be preserved as a place so that a vital, involved and distinctive modern community can maintain its character while meeting the needs and concerns of future growth.

Evaluation Criteria

Based on the analysis of physical and architectural character and the statement of history and significance found in the chapter entitled "Significance of Greenbelt" of this report, it is clear that the potential Greenbelt Historic District would meet all of the criteria outlined in the Preservation Ordinance (Sec.29-104(a)). Those criteria are included here for reference.

(1) Historical and Cultural Significance

(A) The historic resource:

- (i) has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County, State, or Nation;**
- (ii) is the site of a significant historic event;**
- (iii) is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society; or**
- (iv) exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historical heritage of the County and its communities.**

(2) Architectural and Design Significance

(A) The historic resource:

- (i) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or style of construction;**
- (ii) represents the work of a master craftsman, architect or builder;**
- (iii) possesses high artistic values;**
- (iv) represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or**

- (v) represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or County, due to its singular physical characteristics or landscape.

Potential Boundaries

The boundaries of the potential district are drawn to include those significant features within the City of Greenbelt which reflect the establishment and expansion of the planned community between 1935 and 1941. The potential Greenbelt Historic District covers approximately 800 acres of land and approximately 450 structures.² The boundaries exclude more recently developed parcels and

roadways while utilizing such lines of convenience as the City limits to the north; important early roads integral to the community plan; the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, a major physical and visual barrier on the east; and property lines on the south and west. The potential locally designated Greenbelt Historic District has the same boundaries as the existing National Register Historic District with two exceptions; the inclusion of the remainder of the Crescent Road right-of-way between Parkway and Kenilworth Avenue, and the exclusion of a concentrated collection of recently built, single-family houses fronting on Ridge and Research Roads at the north end of the community (see Figure 18).

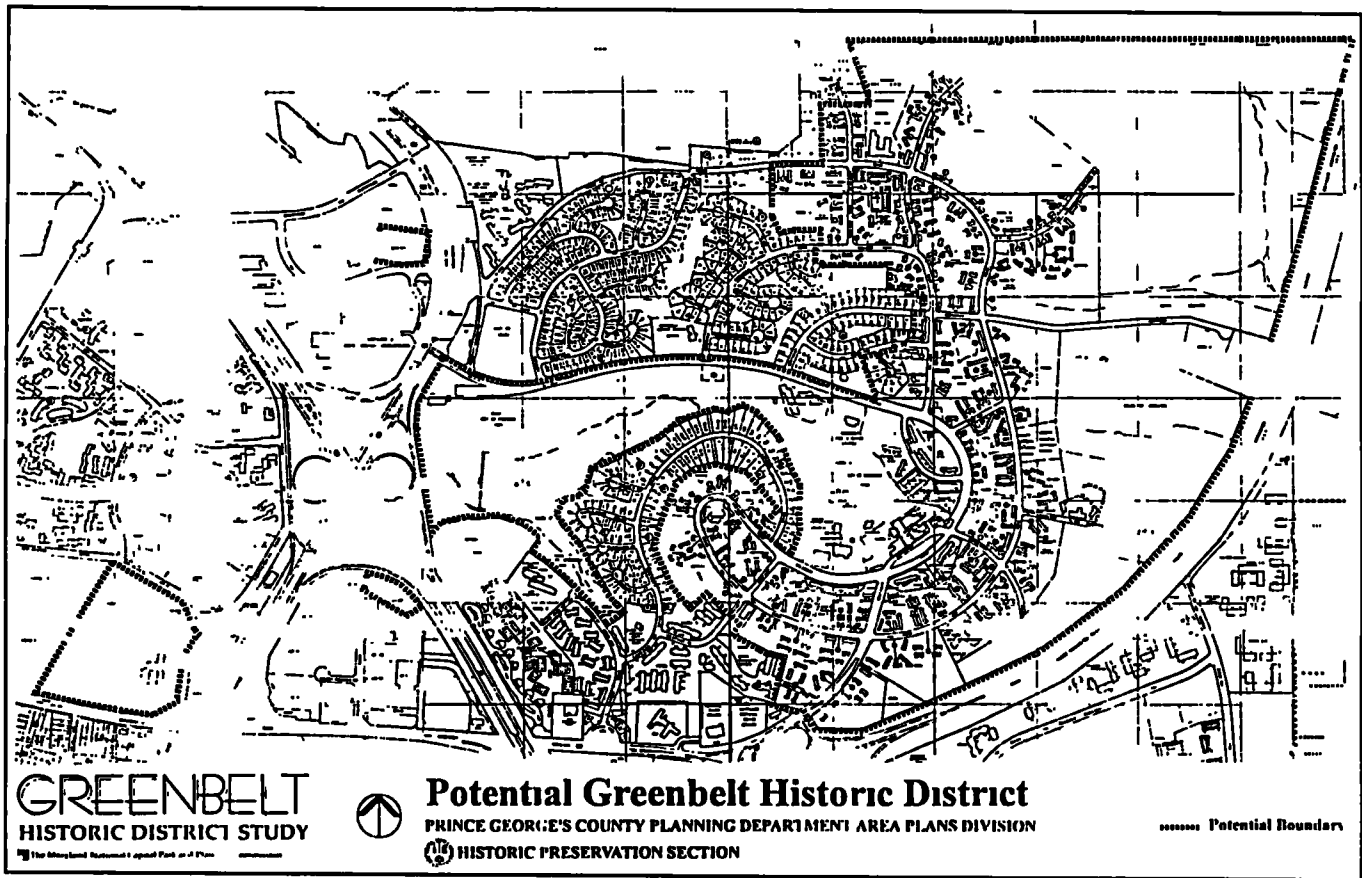


Figure 18 - Potential Greenbelt Historic District Boundaries

² This figure represents the number of structures, rather than dwelling units, within the potential historic district.

Noncontiguous Properties

The potential locally designated historic district (like the National Register Historic District) includes four noncontiguous properties. The largest tract contains the planned community, Greenbelt Lake and recreational facilities and the remaining portion of the surrounding green belt within approximately 760 acres.

The three other small parcels that make up the district contain a City park, a City-owned cemetery and the original Greenbelt High School (now the Greenbelt Middle School) within about 40 acres. Although these properties are separated from one another now by major highways and recent development, they are linked historically to the district's period of significance, the development of community between 1935 and 1941. The old high school is located on Edmonston Road about a mile southwest of the center of Old Greenbelt. As situated outside of the planned community, the school served not only the students of the planned community but also those of the nearby suburb of Berwyn.

The Walker family burial ground is located to the southwest of Old Greenbelt, across the Beltway. It is part of Indian Springs Park which was connected to the parkland surrounding Greenbelt Lake before the construction of the Beltway. A third noncontiguous parcel, the Greenbelt City Cemetery, was formed around an existing Turner family plot. It is located northwest of Old Greenbelt, across Kenilworth Avenue, on Ivy Lane. These old cemeteries are the only remnants of the pre-development, rural, agricultural history of the area. Originally they were retained as points of interest within the planned community (See "Potential Greenbelt Historic District Boundaries Map at back of text.)

Noncontributing Structures

All buildings, sites, structures and objects ("buildings") within the potential historic dis-

trict are evaluated for their historic/architectural character and significance. Buildings are considered either to contribute to the character of the district or not. The following definitions for "Contributing" and "Noncontributing" are those routinely used by the Historic Preservation Commission in developing and evaluating National Register nominations, as well as in the local designation of Historic Sites and Historic Districts:

- (1) A Contributing building, site, structure or object adds to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations, or archeological values for which a property is significant because (a) it was present during the period of significance, and possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time or is capable of yielding important information about the period, or (b) it independently meets the National Register criteria.
- (2) A Noncontributing building, site, structure, or object does not add to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations, or archeological values for which a property is significant because (a) it was not present during the period of significance, (b) due to alterations, disturbances, additions, or other changes, it no longer possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time or is incapable of yielding important information about the period, or (c) it does not independently meet the National Register criteria.³

The vast majority of buildings within the potential historic district contribute directly to the character of the district as a planned ensemble of buildings. There are some structures, however, which do not contribute to the character of the district. These noncontributing buildings can be characterized as those that: (1) were constructed more recently than the main period of significance (1935-1941); (2) lack architectural or historical significance; or (3) have undergone extensive alterations

3 U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places. *Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning*, 1987

which have eliminated most of their original features. For the purposes of this study, these buildings will be considered noncontributing. A listing of noncontributing structures is included as Appendix B.

GREENBELT



HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

Historic District Implementation

HISTORIC DISTRICT IMPLEMENTATION

More than 50 years after its conception and completion, Greenbelt remains a vital, attractive and diverse community. The vitality of the community is testimony to the thoughtfulness of the original vision that created it, as well as a recognition of the contributions made by all those who have lived there. The physical environment of the town, its plan, landscape and buildings, embody the sociological and philosophical ideas that have made for a successful community, and have fostered a unique sense of place.

Should an historic district be designated in Greenbelt, several review processes would be instituted which would provide protection for the resources of the district, while at the same time allowing property owners within the district to receive financial incentives for enhancements. Through the review of building permits and development plans, the Historic Preservation Commission would be able to monitor change in the district, ensuring that the character of the community is preserved. Through the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, the HPC would be able to help offset the costs incurred by property owners during rehabilitation efforts, thereby reducing the financial burden of preservation.

Historic Area Work Permits - Design Review Guidelines

General Guidelines

The continued vitality of Greenbelt as a community is imperative to those who live there now and will live there in the future. The intent of the Old Greenbelt design review parameters is to protect the community's sense of place and provide a framework in which the significant aspects of that place can be maintained and enhanced. Further, the parameters are designed to guide changes to the physical environment of the potential historic district in a reasonable and sensible manner and with regard for the overall effect those changes

would have on the character of the community. The design review parameters do not mandate specific architectural details or responses; they are designed to allow for and promote individual expression that is mindful of the historic and significant features of Old Greenbelt. In addition, the review parameters that follow are meant to build on existing regulations with minimal additional burden to property owners. Nevertheless, in some cases they may represent an additional layer of review. With that in mind, the County's Preservation Tax Credit program is seen as a vital link in the historic district implementation process, and a financial incentive not otherwise available for property improvements.

Review Process

The Historic Area Work Permit review process is considered to be a part of the County's building permit review process. When a property owner applies for a County building permit through the Department of Environmental Resources, the property is evaluated in order to determine whether or not it is designated as an Historic Site or included within an Historic District. If so, it is referred to the Historic Preservation Section of the Planning Department as a Historic Area Work Permit application for review.

Private property within the potential Greenbelt Historic District falls into one of two categories: that which is within the Greenbelt Homes, Inc. cooperative and that which is owned individually. For GHI property, there is an existing building permit review process administered by the Co-op's Technical Services Office. This process now takes place before any review at the County level. This arrangement would continue should an historic district be designated; a GHI permit must be approved before a County building permit, and therefore an Historic Area Work Permit, would be reviewed. For non-GHI property owners, a County permit would be applied for directly (see Figure 19).

Greenbelt Homes, Inc., Green Book Guidelines

Greenbelt Homes, Inc., the housing cooperative that owns the majority of the property within the proposed Historic District, has an extensive design review process for work proposals within its boundaries. The focus of this review process is a set of design guidelines contained within the *Green Book*. These guidelines include design standards for such work as additions, decks, fences, sheds, privacy walls,

trash enclosures, siding, painting and other work. In order to simplify the review process of the Historic Preservation Section, it is anticipated that these guidelines would be used as the standards for reviewing HAWP applications for minor work (e.g., decks, fences, sheds, privacy walls, trash enclosures, etc.) for GHI properties. The GHI guidelines would be used for additions as well, but not as the final standard for review; this would rest with the Historic Preservation Commission (see Appendix E).

Local Advisory Committee

The Study Committee recommends that any proposed Greenbelt Historic District should be represented by a Local Advisory Committee (LAC). The LAC would serve to represent the interests of the historic district before the Historic Preservation Commission and would provide a forum for public opinion on matters affecting the district. The LAC would be composed of a representative group of property owners and community residents (at least 10) including shareholders in GHI, the GHI Architecture and Environment Committee, owners

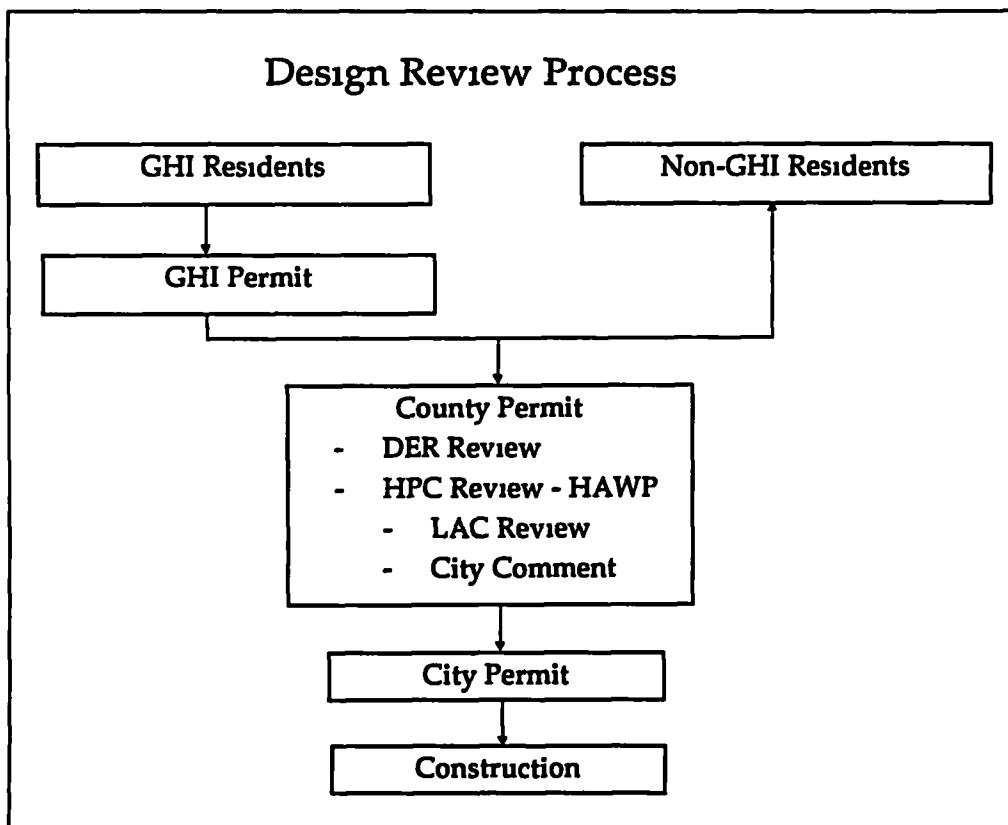


Figure 19 - Historic District Design Review Process

Historic Preservation Commission Review Criteria

The Historic Preservation Commission has adopted design review criteria for evaluating applications for Historic Area Work Permits (HAWPs). The HAWP review criteria are outlined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Section 29-111). In order for a HAWP to be approved, the Historic Preservation Commission must find that a proposal meets one of the six criteria. The HPC Design Review Criteria can be found in Appendix C.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards

Historic Area Work Permits are evaluated based on their compliance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The Secretary's Standards are the Federal government's standards for rehabilitating historic buildings. Many local design review agencies, including the Historic Preservation Commission, have adopted these standards for reviewing rehabilitation projects. Property owners should use them as guidelines for planning rehabilitation work on buildings in the Greenbelt Historic District. The Secretary's Standards can be found in Appendix D.

of single-family residences and multiunit buildings, the owners and tenants of commercial buildings, churches, and representatives of the City of Greenbelt.

Once an Historic Area Work Permit application is submitted to the HPC for review, it is processed by the Historic Preservation Section of the Planning Department for an upcoming HPC agenda. If an historic district is established in Greenbelt, the application would be referred to the LAC for comment, as part of HPC review. Similarly, the LAC would review those planning referrals which require HPC comments. Historic Area Work Permit applications handled as staff sign-offs, and planning referrals not requiring HPC action or comment, would be forwarded to the LAC for informational purposes.

City of Greenbelt Comment

The Historic Preservation Commission is required to notify the City of Greenbelt about any public hearing being held regarding an Historic Area Work Permit application for a property within the city limits. The City would be informed of the type of work requested, and will be given the opportunity to comment as part of the record. Should the City oppose the issuance of a permit, a 2/3 majority of the HPC would be required to override the objection.

Ordinary Maintenance/ Routine Repairs - No HAWP Required

Definition

The Historic Preservation Ordinance does not require an HAWP for minor work which *will have no material effect on the historical, archaeological, architectural, or cultural value of an historic resource.* The intent of this provision is to allow for cyclical maintenance and other minor repairs without the burden of continually applying for permits. Such work is commonly described as *routine or ordinary maintenance.*

Eligible Work

- (1) Ordinary maintenance.

- (2) Repair of roofs, gutters, siding, external doors and windows, trim, lights, and other appurtenant fixtures *with like materials of like design.*
- (3) Painting of nonmasonry surfaces using the same or substantially the same color.
- (4) Paving repair *using like materials of like design.*
- (5) Minor landscaping and gardening.
- (6) Customary farming operations.

Review Process

No Historic Area Work Permit is required for this type of work. However, property owners are encouraged to consult with Historic Preservation Section staff to ensure that their proposals meet the definition of ordinary maintenance. Additionally, the fact that a HAWP is not required does not necessarily mean that other permits may be waived. Applicants should contact all other relevant agencies for the appropriate permits.

Staff Sign-Off

Definition

The Historic Preservation Commission has authorized its staff to issue Historic Area Work Permits for those alterations to structures and environmental settings which

will not significantly change the exterior features of an Historic Site or contributing structure within an Historic District or its environmental setting and which will have no significant effect on its historical, architectural, cultural, or archeological value.

Eligible Work

- (1) Projects which have been reviewed and approved by the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), which in the opinion of staff, meet the conditions for a HAWP
- (2) Projects which have been originated and/or administered by the Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation (M-NCPPC), which have been reviewed and approved by that Department's History Division, and

which in the opinion of staff meet the conditions for a HAWP

- (3) Minor projects which do not require building permits because of cost or because they involve nonstructural alterations.
 - (4) In-kind replacement of existing features and minor repairs and/or modifications to the property which do not significantly alter its visual character. This includes such items as:
 - (a) Repair or replacement of slate or tile roof coverings where there is no change in material.
 - (b) Repair or replacement of masonry foundations where the original foundation material is retained or where new material matches the original as closely as possible; installation of metal foundation vents (on side and rear only) and replacement of wood access doors; installation of foundation access doors which cannot easily be seen from the right-of-way
 - (c) Repointing and other masonry repairs when the color and composition of the mortar matches the original and any new brick or stone used in the repair work matches the original as closely as possible.
 - (d) Removal of asbestos, asphalt, or other artificial siding when the original siding is to be repaired, and (where necessary) replaced in kind.
 - (e) Replacement of missing or deteriorated siding and trim and porch floors, ceilings, columns, railings, balusters and brackets or other architectural details with new materials that are identical to the original.
 - (f) Removal of accessory buildings which are not original to the site or otherwise historically significant and/or which cannot easily be seen from the street.
 - (g) Replacement of missing architectural details, provided that at least the following conditions are met:
 - (1) At least one example of the detail to be replaced remains on the house; or,
 - (2) Physical or documentary evidence exists which illustrates or describes the missing detail or details. (Examples of this include photographs, drawings, or other physical signs on the structure which show that such details were formerly present and which suggest the shape, size and placement of the detail.); or,
 - (3) Within a Historic District, the proposed replacement detail is very similar to original details found on at least one structure within the District which is comparable in terms of style, size and age.
 - (h) Signs which do not require a sign permit.
 - (i) Additions which are not readily visible from a public right-of-way and/or are easily removable (such as the addition of a wooden deck on the rear of a house).
 - (j) Installation of gutters painted to match the house or trim, as long as no significant architectural features are removed.
 - (5) Construction of fences which are compatible with the visual character of the Historic Site or the Historic District in terms of material, height, location and design.
 - (6) In-kind replacement of existing fences or minor alterations to same which do not significantly change the original appearance or the material used.
 - (7) The construction or replacement of brick, stone, concrete or gravel walkways, parking areas, patios, driveways or other paved areas which are not readily visible from a public right-of-way and/or are compatible in material, location and design with the visual character of the Historic Site or District; also minor repairs to the above which do not significantly change their appearance or the material used.
-

- (8) Construction or repair of brick or stone retaining walls where the new walls are compatible in material, location, design and height with the visual character of the Historic Site or District or where repair work uses in-kind materials and does not significantly change the appearance of the original.
- (9) Landscaping, or the removal or modification of existing plantings, which is compatible with the visual character of the Historic Site or Historic District in terms of type, height and location.
- (10) Construction or replacement of storage and accessory buildings which are not visible from the right-of-way

Review Process

The administration of staff sign-offs is guided by the following policies:

- (1) Delegation to staff is limited to those items specifically listed above and subject to the conditions enumerated.
- (2) The HPC may, if it so chooses, review all HAWP approvals by staff at the next meeting.
- (3) Property owners shall retain the right of appeal to the HPC from a staff sign-off, as will property owners within the area of notification.
- (4) Staff shall refer an application to the HPC if any uncertainty exists as to whether the application meets the criteria for issuing a HAWP
- (5) All HAWP decisions will comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, where applicable.

Application of GHI Guidelines

As stated above, the GHI Green Book guidelines would be used by the Historic Preservation Section staff in reviewing staff sign-off applications for properties within the Co-op. This would include such work items as decks, fences, sheds, patios, trash enclosures and privacy walls - all of which are governed by specific standards in the Green Book. It should be noted that the GHI guidelines would not apply to those property owners outside of the Co-op. For those cases, the staff will use the standard

review process, outlined above. (Note: because decks and sheds are not normally included as eligible for staff sign-off, the HPC Rules of Procedure would have to be altered for Greenbelt, which would necessitate the approval of the County Council. Such an amendment to the Rules of Procedure would be included as part of any Council approval of an Historic District.)

Historic Preservation Commission Review

Definition

The Historic Preservation Ordinance requires that the HPC review applications for work which *could significantly alter the character of an Historic Site or District*. For this type of work, the application would be reviewed at a public hearing by the HPC.

Eligible Work

The type of work which would be required to receive HPC review includes:

- (1) Additions
- (2) Major alterations
- (3) Demolition
- (4) New construction
- (5) Other types of work which are not considered eligible for staff sign-off.

In Greenbelt, there are several ongoing maintenance programs of GHI which include work items that would normally require an approval by the Historic Preservation Commission and would not normally comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. These include the addition of vinyl and aluminum siding and the replacement of the original casement windows with modern sash windows. Each of these types of work have been approved by the Maryland Historical Trust, and therefore qualify for staff sign-off. It is anticipated that these work items, because they have already been largely implemented, would be allowed to continue, with approval given at the staff level.

Review Process

In order to effect the timely review of applications, there would need to be a great deal of communication between the staffs of the HPC and GHI. It is recommended that the Historic Preservation Section staff be available to assist the GHI Technical Services staff in identifying potential conflicts when an application is submitted to GHI. This will ensure that the concerns of the HPC, GHI and property owners are addressed early on, rather than waiting until the HPC hearing.

All applications for major work would also be reviewed by the Local Advisory Committee. This would ensure that the larger community has an input into the review process. The LAC could also be useful in facilitating the communication between property owners, GHI, City Officials and the HPC.

Application of GHI Guidelines

As stated earlier, the GHI guidelines would be used by the Historic Preservation Commission in their review of HAWP applications. However, because the GHI guidelines are not written to achieve historic preservation objectives, the HPC cannot use them as the sole standard of review. Instead, the Secretary's Standards and the HPC Review Criteria would be emphasized.

Development Referrals

The HPC serves in an advisory capacity to the Planning Board for development applications within and adjacent to Historic Sites and Districts. Called "development referrals," because they are referred to the HPC, such applications include subdivisions, rezonings, departures and waivers, special exceptions, site plans and other development-related proposals. In these cases, the Historic Preservation Section staff would review the application for its impact on the Historic Site or District, and make comments to the Planning Department staff for inclusion in their staff report. Additionally, the HPC would be given an opportunity to make direct recommendations to the Planning Board, based on their review and discussion at their meeting. For those applica-

tions within and adjacent to an Historic District, the Local Advisory Committee would also have the opportunity to review the plans and make recommendations to the HPC and the Planning Board. For the one existing County Historic District - Broad Creek - this has proved to be an effective means for residents to have more direct involvement in the development process.

Preservation Incentives

Prince George's County Preservation Tax Credit

The Study Committee anticipates that the County's Historic Preservation Tax credit program will be extensively relied upon by property owners in the potential historic district. Owners of "contributing structures" within the district would be eligible for a 10 percent property tax credit for approved rehabilitation work and compatible additions to existing buildings within the potential district; new construction within the district would be eligible for a 5 percent property tax credit. The Preservation Tax credit applies to the *County levy only* and cannot be applied to other portions of a property owner's tax liability.

Assuming a local district is approved, if work is certified by the HPC as eligible for a tax credit, the application would be forwarded to the Treasury Division for issuance of the credit for the tax year following the year in which the work was completed. The credit would be mailed directly to the homeowner listed on the application. Since taxes are paid by GHI per block, it would be necessary for the Treasury Division to determine what percentage of a block's assessment can be attributed to the applicant so that the credit could be applied to that percentage. In a case where GHI would be in a position to receive a credit, GHI would be listed as the applicant and receive the credit directly.

Maryland State Income Tax Deduction (502H)

Property owners within the Greenbelt National Register Historic District may take advantage of an existing financial incentive provided by the State of Maryland. Article 81, Section 281a (as amended) of the Laws of Maryland provides for a State income tax deduction for the restoration or rehabilitation of "certified" historic residential property under the following conditions:

The historic property must be owner-occupied and be (1) individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places; (2) identified as a "contributing property" within an historic district listed in the National Register; (3) designated as an individual landmark under a local "certified" preservation ordinance; or (4) identified as a contributing property within an historic district designated under a local "certified" ordinance. The Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission is a "certified local government."

The deduction applies to both interior and exterior work.

The deduction is allowable for 100 percent of the cost of a "certified" rehabilitation, to be amortized over five years at the rate of 20 percent each year.

The restoration plans must be certified as complying with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

Applications (Form 502H) are available from the Maryland Historical Trust and should be submitted with the owner's income tax return along with photographs documenting before and after conditions. For additional information, contact the Maryland Historical Trust, 100 Community Place, Crownsville, Maryland, 21032-2023, Tel. 410-514-7600.

GREENBELT



HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

**Conclusion -- Recommended
Course of Action**

CONCLUSION -- RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION

This report represents the efforts of local citizens and public officials to examine the questions associated with a locally designated historic district for one of the most significant twentieth century communities in Prince George's County and the United States. The planning ideals embodied by the Federal government's Green Towns program are most fully realized in Old Greenbelt. The community has been the subject of intensive study and has served as a planning model even before its completion in the late 1930s. The fact that the community has survived essentially intact for more than 50 years is worthy of recognition and celebration.

This goal was partially accomplished when Old Greenbelt was listed as an Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. National Register listing by itself only provides recognition for the district and few concrete methods of ensuring protection to its buildings, environment and sense of place. Another way of acknowledging significance is to pursue designation as a Prince George's County Historic District. In addition to providing local recognition, a local historic district would provide a stronger mechanism for managing change and protecting the integrity of Old Greenbelt.

Interim Methods of Protection and Recognition

The Study Committee feels that as a long-term goal, a locally designated Historic District would be the best means of protecting the historic character and significance of Old Greenbelt. Nevertheless, the Committee recognizes that any effort to designate such a district must meet with substantial, if not overwhelming support from affected residents and

property owners. With this in mind, the Committee strongly recommends that an education/public information program be initiated to inform local residents of the historic and architectural significance of Old Greenbelt as well as the benefits and limitations associated with historic district designation. This educational effort could be anticipated to last several years.

The Committee has reviewed a number of interim steps toward a locally designated historic district, and recommends that several be initiated along with the educational program. These include the preparation of a National Historic Landmark nomination for Old Greenbelt, the County-level designation of several individual properties, and the exploration of various types of easement for the community's public spaces and the remaining green belt.

National Historic Landmark Program

The National Historic Landmarks program, administered by the National Park Service, is the highest form of recognition provided by the Federal government for properties of extraordinary significance. Like the National Register program, the National Historic Landmark (NHL) program is largely honorific. The Federal government will review the effects of its own actions or funds on the property while private owners enjoy unrestricted rights to their property. The Historic Preservation Section of the Prince George's County Planning Department conducted a site visit of Old Greenbelt with the staff of the National Historic Landmark program. Based on the visit and an analysis of existing National Register materials (which would serve as the basis for NHL documentation), National Park Service staff felt that Old Greenbelt would meet NHL designation criteria and welcomed an application.

4 *A site visit of the Greenbelt National Register Historic District was conducted with Carolyn Pitts, Historian, National Historic Landmark Program/ National Park Service, on February 24, 1993.*

Historic Site Designations

There are several sites within the potential Historic District that are significant enough to merit individual Historic Site designation. Historic Site designations for the Roosevelt Center and the Greenbelt Museum could proceed even if the remainder of the potential district does not go forward. In addition, the owners of several apartment buildings or of selected rowhouse blocks or courts, who are interested in taking advantage of the County's Preservation Tax Credit program, could seek designation as well. The Study Committee recommends that Historic Site evaluations be conducted independent of the evaluation of a potential historic district based on formal expressions of interest from property owners.

Educational Programs

The Study Committee has concluded that any move towards a local Historic District must be preceded by an extensive educational effort. This effort would serve two purposes: to generate support for a district; and to increase the general awareness about what makes Greenbelt significant and what can be done to protect its character. The need for such an effort has become clear throughout the course of this study. Some have exhibited skepticism about the need for a district, while others are uncertain about its impact. Additionally, there are a number of opinions about what makes Greenbelt significant and how it should be protected.

Such an effort could be done in a number of ways. Either as a community-based project or with further assistance from the Prince George's County Planning Department, publications could be prepared about certain aspects of the City's history or to explain the value of an historic district. Similarly, a schedule of workshops and lectures could be organized to convey the same information, and allow for more interaction with the community. Charettes, or intensive design workshops, could be held for community residents to examine ways of protecting the architecture of Greenbelt while allowing for modern needs and conveniences. Any of these formats

would help to increase the public's awareness of the issues related to an historic district.

Preservation and Conservation Easements

The Study Committee discussed the issues associated with the granting of both open-space and preservation easements covering the significant aspects of Old Greenbelt, including such elements as the network of inner walkways and gardens, the remaining portion of the surrounding green belt, and significant buildings. The Committee acknowledged that a recent referendum concerning an open space easement did not pass, but felt that a revisiting of the issue during the discussion of a potential historic district designation would be useful.

A number of local and state agencies maintain easement programs designed to protect historic buildings, natural environment or scenic environments in perpetuity from development or alterations that would denigrate their integrity and value. Typically, easements are structured to allow property owners full use and enjoyment of their property except for those interests covered by the easement such as new development, substantial alterations or demolitions. The easement is periodically monitored by the receiving agency to ensure compliance with the terms of the agreement.

A gift of easement may have income, gift, estate and real property tax consequences that will be beneficial to the donor. The tax consequences of a gift of an easement are, for the most part, directly related to the value of the gift. The value of a preservation easement is equal to the loss in value of the property which results from subjecting the property to the easement. The value of an easement may vary with the type of property in question and the financial interests of the owner. An easement may be granted with little or no financial incentive by a public body, and with greater incentive by a private, tax-paying property owner, such as GHI. Easements can be granted to cover open spaces or individual structures. For more information about easement options, see Appendix E.

Historic Road Status

The *Prince George's Road Ordinance* allows for the County Council to designate Scenic and Historic Roads. Although these designations are typically reserved for rural areas, it is possible that the roads of Old Greenbelt would fit the definition of a Historic Road, which reads, " a public or private road which has been documented by historic surveys, and which maintains its historic alignment and historic landscape context through views of natural features, historic landscape patterns, historic sites and structures, historic farmstead groupings, or rural villages." Such a designation could reinforce the importance that Greenbelt's road layout played in the overall planning philosophy of the community. It could also form an additional layer of protection from what could be considered to be adverse road improvements.

GHI Process Adjustment

Whether or not the individual Historic Site designations outlined above are pursued, GHI might contemplate revisions to the Green Book to enhance the historic character of the community. The Green Book guidelines allow for some additions that effectively encapsulate or alter original dwelling units beyond recognition. GHI should consider a reworking of its guidelines for additions to allow for personal expression while precluding the destruction of an individual unit or breaking up the cohesiveness and general compatibility of a row or court.

Designation Process

After a review of the findings of this report, the City of Greenbelt should take the following steps:

1. The City Council should sponsor a series of public informational meetings to publicize the findings of the study. It is recommended that at least initially, these meetings be targeted at specific interest groups (e.g., the business community, private homeowners, GHI, etc.), so that their

specific concerns can be effectively addressed.

2. If there is substantial support for the proposal, the City Council should develop a formal mechanism (a poll or a referendum) to solicit the opinions of all affected residents and property owners.
3. If a clear majority of those affected are in support of the proposed district, the City should request evaluation by the Historic Preservation Commission.
4. The HPC would hold a public hearing on the proposed district, soliciting a formal response from the City (likely, to be based on the results of polling). The HPC hearing would be an additional opportunity for Greenbelt residents to voice their opinions on the matter. An appeal of the HPC decision would be made to the County Council.

The Study Committee recommends that throughout each of these steps, Planning Department staff of the City of Greenbelt and the Historic Preservation Section staff of M-NCPPC should be available to outline the findings of the study and the designation and regulation process.

GREENBELT



HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

Appendices



APPENDIX A: Property Ownership

Old Greenbelt is made up of a number of property owners. The largest group comprises the shareholders of Greenbelt Homes, Inc., a housing cooperative. Additional property owners include the City of Greenbelt; a number of private detached, single-family home-

owners; individuals or corporations controlling multiunit residential buildings or commercial structures; and public agencies operating public buildings, parks, schools and recreational facilities.

PROPERTY ADDRESS	PROPERTY OWNER	BUILDING TYPE
107 & 113 Centerway	George Christacos 4500 Park Road Alexandria, VA 22312	Shopping Center
115 Centerway	Greenbelt Professional Building, Inc.	Offices
121 Centerway	Glen Burnie Partnership c/o Bruce Kannee 11108 Norlee Drive Silver Spring, MD 20902	Co-op Supermarket
151 Centerway	Howard Chasnow 7323 Baylor Avenue College Park, MD 20740	Commercial
161 Centerway	Mobil Oil Corp. P.O. Box 290 Dallas, TX 75221	Gas Station
12-26 Crescent Road	Ronald Seltzer 140 Degas Road Portola Valley, CA 94028-7709	Apartments (48)
28-40 Crescent Road	DSL Foundation c/o Charles L. Levin P.O. Box 887 Detroit, MI 48231	Apartments (42)
135 Crescent	St. Hugh's Catholic Church c/o John Cardinal Hickey 1721 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W Washington, D.C. 20036	Church
2 Forestway	William & Beth Novick	Single-Family Dwelling (SFD)
4 Forestway	Vivian P Edwards	SFD
6 Forestway	Robert B. Trumbule	SFD
3 Forestway	Emory R. Kerr	SFD
5 Forestway	Timothy W Morgan	SFD
7 Forestway	Ruth H. Osborn	SFD
9 Forestway	Patrick McAndrew	SFD
10 Forestway	Victor A. Karcher	SFD
1 Forestway	Albert R. Myers	SFD
8 Forestway	Kevin C. Foster	SFD
1 Hillside Road	Greenbelt Comm. Church	Church

PROPERTY ADDRESS	PROPERTY OWNER	BUILDING
137 Northway	Joseph Natoli	SFD
139 Northway	John B. Hinsley, Jr.	SFD
10 Ridge Road	Jewish Community Center	Community Center
40 Ridge Road	Mowatt Memorial Church	Church
1-7 Parkway 42-54 Crescent Road	Steven M. Cohn c/o Arthur L. Willcher, Trus. 5597 Seminary Road Falls Church, VA 22044	Apartments (66)
2-6 & 16-22 Parkway	Three Oaks Limited P.O. Box 4204 Silver Spring, MD 20914	Apartments (42)
8-14 Parkway	Elda L. Scallion c/o Rubin & Associates, CPA 4520 East West Highway Suite 550 Bethesda, MD 20814	Apartments (52)
9A-F, 11A-D Parkway 51, 53A, 53B, 53C Crescent Road	David & Samuel Feldman Zuckerman & Kronstadt, Inc. 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, #700 Bethesda, MD 20814	Apartments (83)

APPENDIX B: List of Noncontributing Structures

This list includes structures identified as noncontributing because they were constructed after the main period of significance (1935-1941).

Greenbelt Municipal Building
25 Crescent Road (1964)

Greenbelt Public Library
11 Crescent Road (1970)

Greenbelt Professional Building
115 Centerway (1965)

Co-op Supermarket
121 Centerway (1948, rebuilt 1962)

Greenbelt Plaza Apartments,
9 & 11 Parkway
51 and 53 Crescent Road (1959)

Greenbelt Homes, Inc. Offices
Hamilton Place (1950s)

Greenbelt Fire and Rescue Station
125 Crescent Road (1960)

Greenridge House
22 Ridge Road (1979)

Mishkan Torah Jewish Community Center
10 Ridge Road (1952)

St. Hugh's Catholic Church and School
135 and 145 Crescent Road (1963)

Mowatt Memorial Methodist Church
40 Ridge Road (1955)

Greenbelt Community Church
1 Hillside Road (1949)

North End Elementary School
66 Ridge Road (1993)

Greenbelt Aquatic and Fitness Center
101 Centerway (1991)

Greenbelt Homes Townhouses
5 Laurel Hill Road and 65 Ridge Road (1970)

APPENDIX C: The Historic Preservation Commission Design Review Criteria

Prince George's County Code, Section 29-111(b):

1. The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource.
2. The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural, or cultural features of the historic resource and is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Subtitle.
3. The proposal will enhance or aid in the protection, preservation, and public or private utilization of the historic resource in a manner compatible with its historical, archeological, architectural, or cultural value.
4. The proposal is necessary to remedy unsafe conditions or health hazards.
5. The proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship.
6. In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic resource with the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by issuance of the permit.

In addition, the Historic Preservation Ordinance states that in the case of any application for work within an environmental setting of an Historic Site, or on property located within an Historic District, the HPC shall be lenient in its judgement of applications for structures of little historical or design significance or for new construction. Thus means that the HPC will authorize issuance of such a permit, with any necessary conditions, if authorization of the permit would not impair the character of the Historic Site or Historic District [Section 29-111(c)]. Finally, the Ordinance states that new construction, alterations or repairs are not limited to any particular period or architectural style [Section 29-111(d)].

APPENDIX D: The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

- 1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.**
- 2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.**
- 3. All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.**
- 4. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.**
- 5. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity**
- 6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence, rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.**
- 7. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic materials shall not be undertaken.**
- 8. Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.**
- 9. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood and environment.**
- 10. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.**

APPENDIX E: Preservation and Conservation Easement Holders in Maryland

Additional tools to recognize, protect and enhance the historic character of Old Greenbelt include a number of programs with a range of regulatory impacts. This appendix includes specific information about those methods discussed by the Study Committee, but is not a complete list. Other methods that could be examined include the establishment of a conservation district (a County Ordinance would be necessary), and the development of specific design and land use zones as part of the master plan and small area plan processes.

Maryland Historical Trust Preservation Easements

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), an agency of the Maryland State Department of Economic and Community Development, operates a Preservation Easement program designed to protect historic buildings and their surrounding property in perpetuity from development or alterations that would denigrate historic integrity or value. These preservation easements are similarly structured to those of the Maryland Environmental Trust, and allow property owners full use of their property except for those interests covered by the easement such as new development, substantial alterations or demolitions. A preservation easement, like a conservation easement, is periodically monitored by the receiving agency to ensure compliance with the terms of the agreement. An easement accepted by the Maryland Historical Trust, a State agency, is immune from city and county condemnation, although it is generally not insulated from State or Federal powers.

The gift of a preservation easement may have income, gift, estate or real property tax consequences that will be beneficial to the donor. The tax consequences of a gift of easement are, for the most part, directly related to the value of the gift. The value of a preservation easement is equal to the loss in value of

the property which results from subjecting the property to the easement.

As in the case of an open space easement, the value of a preservation easement may vary with the type of property in question and the financial interests of the owner. A preservation easement may be granted with little or no financial incentive by a public body, and with greater incentive by a private, tax-paying property owner. Easements could also be granted as a condition of funding, as will be the case with the rehabilitation of the Greenbelt Center School.

Maryland Environmental Trust Gift Easement Program

The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), a statewide agency created by the General Assembly in 1967, administers a Conservation Easement program to ensure the protection of open space areas such as farms and forest land, wildlife habitat, historic sites, and properties with scenic features. Conservation Easements appeal to landowners who are concerned about the quality of their natural surroundings and do not want their properties destroyed by development either in their lifetimes or thereafter. Typically, land under easement is privately owned and may be lived on or fully enjoyed by the owner. All rights of ownership are retained by the owner except the right to develop the property.

Conservation Easement donations to the Maryland Environmental Trust serve to (1) secure the long-term protection of land for specified conservation purposes; (2) permit continued private ownership, use and residency; (3) permit the sale of property in whole or in part, subject to binding conservation provisions; (4) enable landowners to pass property to their heirs; and (5) afford landowners the opportunity to take immediate advantage of certain tax benefits and other financial incentives.

If an easement was granted to MET for open spaces owned by GHI, such as the system of inner walkways, gardens, and the remaining portion of the green belt, the cooperative, as a tax-paying property owner could enjoy tax benefits. In the case of open space or currently undeveloped land that is publicly owned, there would be no direct financial incentive, but rather the formal mechanism for ensuring limited development or no development in perpetuity

Prince George's County Scenic Easement Tax Credits

Open space or open area are defined by the Annotated Code of Maryland (5-1201) as:

any space or area characterized by great natural scenic beauty, or whose existing openness, natural condition, and present state of use, if retained, would enhance the present or potential value of abutting or surrounding urban development, or maintain or enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources.

To encourage the protection of Prince George's County's natural resources (open spaces, scenic views, wildlife habitats, etc.) a County program provides a property tax credit of up to 50 percent to the owner of any land considered to be an *open space* or *open area* and upon which a scenic easement has been placed. In the instance where a legally enforceable option to provide for the sale of the property, at a price at or below market value, to the County, State or Federal government or to M-NCPPC within a specified length of time, has been placed with an easement, a property tax credit of 100 percent is available.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission Informational Handouts:

- "What Is a Historic District?"
- "Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission Rules of Procedure"
- "How to Obtain a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP)"
- "Prince George's County Historic Preservation Program"
- "Some Questions About the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Program"
- "Design Review for County Historic Sites and Historic Districts"
- "Directory of Restoration/Preservation Products and Services"
- "Procedures for the Establishment and Operation of Local Advisory Committees (LAC's)"
- "Prince George's County Preservation Commission Local Advisory Committee Review Form"
- "Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission Historic District Advisory Committee Review Form"
- "Prince George's County Historic Preservation Tax Credit"

Bocaccio, Mary, et al., *Greenbelt, Maryland: A Guide to Further Sources*. (University of Maryland, 1981.).

Burch, T Raymond, *History and Development of the City of College Park, Berwyn Heights, Greenbelt, and Adjacent Areas*. Second Edition, 1989

City of Greenbelt, "Building Permit Requirements," 1993.

Conkin, Paul K., *Tomorrow a New World: The New Deal Community Program*. (New York: DaCapo Press, 1976).

Greenbelt Homes, Inc. Shareholders' Handbook, Bylaws and Design Guidelines.

Hauenstein, Thomas, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Greenbelt Historic District, 1979

Horner, Garrett D., "Pre-Fabricated 'Village' Rises as a New Solution in Housing." *The*

Washington Evening Star, February 2, 1938, p. B-1.

Klaus, Susan, ed., *Links in the Chain: Greenbelt, Maryland and the New Town Movement in America - An Annotated Bibliography on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Greenbelt, Maryland*. (Washington, DC. Center for Washington Area Studies/George Washington University, 1987).

Maryland Environmental Trust, "Conservation Easements,"

Maryland Historical Trust, "Preservation Easements," Revised 1977

Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources, "Building and Grading Permits Guide," 1991 Edition.

Williamson, Mary Lou, ed., *Greenbelt: History of a New Town, 1937-1987* (Norfolk, VA. The Donning Co., 1987).

Greenbelt Historic District Study Committee

Sheldon Goldberg, Advisory Planning Board

Ted Kowaluk

Terrence Lee

James Maher, GHI A & E Committee

Roberta McCarthy, Advisory Planning Board

Robert Rashkin, GHI A & E Committee

Martha Sinden, GHI A & E Committee

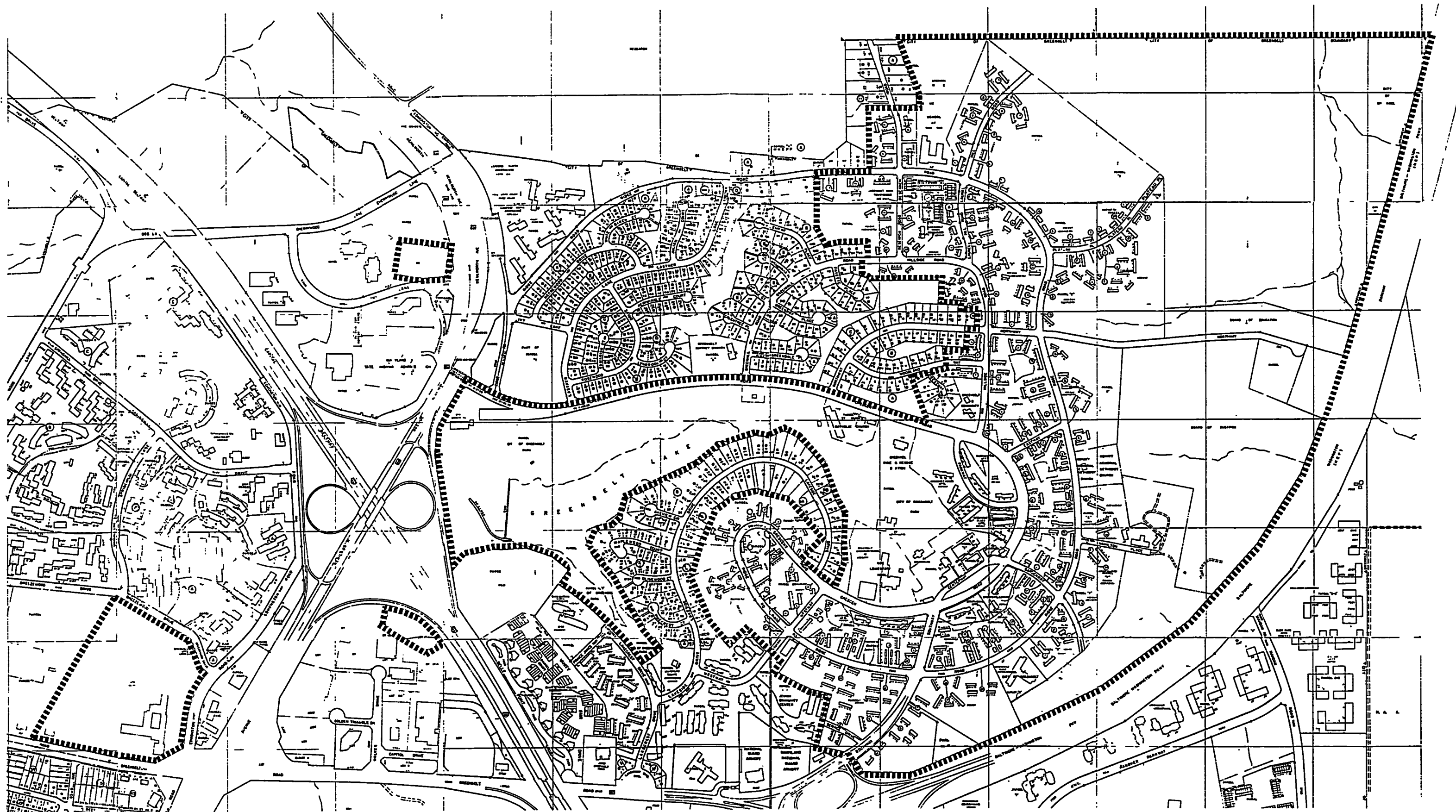
Robert Trumbule

City of Greenbelt Planning Department

Celia Wilson, Planning Director

Daphne Quinn, Planning Intern

Additional technical assistance was provided by Jay Freedman, Director of Technical Services, Greenbelt Homes, Inc., Porter Venn, Assistant Director, Treasury Division, Prince George's County Office of Finance, and James Soresi, Assistant Supervisor, State Department of Assessment and Taxation.



GREENBELT HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission



Potential Greenbelt Historic District

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT AREA PLANS DIVISION



HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION

----- Potential Boundary

February 1994

PREPARED BY

**The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Prince George's County Planning Department**

**Fern V. Piret, Ph.D., Planning Director
Michael E. Petrenko, AICP, Deputy Planning Director**

**A.R. Tankersley, Chief, Community Planning Division
Gail C. Rothrock, AICP, Project Coordinator
Howard S. Berger, Architectural Historian, Author.
Robert D. Rivers, Preservation Planner, Author**

Technical Assistance

**Sandra A. Cross, Administrative Aide III
Samuel Dixon, Graphic Designer
Lauren Glascoe, Supervisor, Word Processing Center
Susan Kelley, Supervisor, Office Services
Terri Plumb, Publications Specialist
Arie Stouten, AICP, Acting Planning Supervisor, Publications and Mapping
Gary R. Thomas, Planning Technician IV**

Photographs

**Howard S. Berger
Robert D. Rivers
Susan G. Pearl**

This publication has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, made available through the Maryland Historical Trust, an entity within the Department of Housing and Community Development, State of Maryland. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of these agencies.

This program receives Federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental Federally Assisted Housing Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operation by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127



GREENBELT

HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY

 The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission