

ITEM 4

PUBLIC HEARING  
(PRELIMINARY) DRAFT

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

**MORELAND AND SYCAMORE STORE**

An amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*; being also an amendment to the *Bethesda/Chevy Chase Master Plan (1990)* and an amendment to the *General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District within Montgomery County, Maryland*

Prepared By:

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
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November 2004

Reviewed By:

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
(Date to be Established)

Approved By:

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
(Date to be Established)

## ABSTRACT

**TITLE:** Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Moreland and Sycamore Store*

**AUTHOR:** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

**SUBJECT:** Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Moreland and Sycamore Store*

**DATE:** November 2004

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

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

**ABSTRACT:** This document contains the text, with supporting maps, for an amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County*, being also an amendment to the *Bethesda/Chevy Chase Master Plan (1990)* and an amendment to the *General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland- Washington Regional District Within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*. This amendment proposes designation of two individual sites on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, thereby extending to them the protection of County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

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## **MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS**

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

### **Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment**

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

### **Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment**

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

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

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

### **Adopted Amendment**

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

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

The *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and the *Historic Preservation Ordinance*, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code, are designed to protect and preserve Montgomery County's historic and architectural heritage. When an historic resource is placed on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, the adoption action officially designates the property as an historic site or historic district, and subjects it to the further procedural requirements of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Designation of historic sites and districts serves to highlight the values that are important in maintaining the individual character of the County and its communities. It is the intent of the County's preservation program to provide a rational system for evaluating, protecting and enhancing the County's historic and architectural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations of Montgomery County residents. The accompanying challenge is to weave protection of this heritage into the County's planning program so as to maximize community support for preservation and minimize infringement on private property rights.

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

(1) Historical and cultural significance:

The historic resource:

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

(2) Architectural and design significance:

The historic resource:

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

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Once designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, historic resources are subject to the protection of the Ordinance. Any substantial changes to the exterior of a resource or its environmental setting must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission and an historic area work permit issued under the provisions of the County's Preservation Ordinance, Section 24A-6. In accordance with the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and unless otherwise specified in the amendment, the environmental setting for each site, as defined in Section 24A-2 of the Ordinance, is the entire parcel on which the resource is located as of the date it is designated on the Master Plan.

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

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

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

In addition to protecting designated resources from unsympathetic alteration and insensitive redevelopment, the County's Preservation Ordinance also empowers the County's Department of Environmental Protection and the Historic Preservation Commission to prevent the demolition of historic buildings through neglect.

The Montgomery County Council passed legislation in September 1984 to provide for a tax credit against County real property taxes in order to encourage the restoration and preservation of privately owned structures located in the County. The credit applies to all properties designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* (Chapter 52, Art. VI). Furthermore, the Historic Preservation Commission maintains up-to-date information on the status of preservation incentives including tax credits, tax benefits possible through the granting of easements on historic properties, outright grants and low-interest loan programs.

## THE AMENDMENT

The purpose of this amendment is to designate two individual sites on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, thereby extending to them the protection of County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

35-154          Moreland          7810 Moorland Lane, Bethesda

- Built by Samuel Wheatley in 1894, Moreland was a summer retreat. It represents an era when Bethesda was a desirable seasonal location for residences of prominent District residents.
- Samuel Wheatley (1844-1900) was a former D. C. Commissioner who had operated a successful lumber business in Georgetown.
- This grand frame residence is an excellent example of early Colonial Revival style architecture. Its skillful styling includes porch roof balustrade, modillion cornice, and pedimented dormers with pilasters.
- The design of Moreland also reflects the influence of the Queen Anne style typical of early Colonial Revival architecture. Features representative of this influence include the wraparound effect of the front porch, complex roofline, and deep massing.
- Moreland meets criteria 1a, 1d, and 2a.
- The recommended environmental setting is the entire 0.5-acre lot, being part Lot 6, Block 1 of Wheatley Hills.



- The Sycamore Store is significant for representing the development of the Glen Echo Heights area. The structure is the last vestige of a commercial intersection that thrived from about 1892, when the Baltzley brothers established a nearby store until 1995, when the Sycamore Store closed.
- The resource is significant for representing the summer resort history of the Potomac River valley in Montgomery County. The store was operated by members of the Sycamore Island Club, a private club for outdoor enthusiasts located within walking distance. Hugh Johnston, Captain of Sycamore Island Club, opened the store about 1920.
- Located at the one-time terminus of the Glen Echo Railroad, known as Sycamore Junction, the store has a close relationship with the streetcar. Even after the streetcar line was extended to Glen Echo, the trolley continued to stop at the Sycamore Store. The store was located across Walhonding Road from the stone car barn and power house.
- The Sycamore Store is an established and familiar visual feature of the Glen Echo Heights neighborhood. Built as a bungalow-type residence about 1916, the structure was converted into a store about 1920, and was expanded with a front addition by the early 1930s.
- This resource meets criteria 1a, 1d, and 2e. *2d*
- The recommended environmental setting is the entire parcel of 6,873 square feet, being part of Lot 32, Block 2 of Glen Echo Heights.

