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Suburbanization Historic Context and Survey Methodology

The "Suburbanization Historic Context and Survey Methodology"

The "Suburbanization Historic Context and Survey Methodology" was developed specifically for the I-495/I-95 Corridor Transportation Study in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area of Maryland. However, because the context also discusses suburban development in Baltimore, it has statewide applicability. The two-volume report identifies the variety of residential, commercial and civic developments which transformed the landscape in and around Washington D.C. and Baltimore beginning in the nineteenth century. Two important aspects of the context are the identification of patterns of development and CDEs for various types of suburban development in planned and unplanned neighborhoods, and the creation of individual Community Summary Sheets which capture the important features of many areas in Prince George's and Montgomery counties, Maryland. SHA uses this context to evaluate the National Register eligibility of suburban buildings, sites, and structures.

D. IDENTIFICATION OF SUBURBAN PROPERTY TYPES

This chapter of the historic context is organized in three sections that define the various suburban property types found in the study area. Each section provides a brief history of the suburban building type, criteria by which to assess its significance, and a list of character-defining elements (CDEs) to aid in its evaluation. The CDEs were developed from general research on the property types. They will be checked for consistency in the field and may need to be revised following intensive on-site survey as the project progresses. The evaluation criteria and CDEs are applicable to individual structures, as well as to entire neighborhoods.

The chapter first defines and discusses three community types found in the study area: Unplanned Suburban Neighborhoods, Planned Suburban Neighborhoods, and Planned Suburban Developments (sections D.1.1 through D.1.3.5). Next the chapter discusses the residential and non-residential building types that comprise these communities. The residential building types comprise one function (i.e. residence), which is presented according to building styles and forms (sections D.2 through D.2.5). The non-residential building types comprise numerous functions and are organized by function (sections D.3 through D.3.4.5).

D.1 Community Types

For the purposes of this report, the following statements are used to define neighborhoods and developments. A neighborhood is a community of associated structures, including residential, commercial, industrial, municipal, etc., constructed by a variety of individuals over a period of time ranging from a few years to several decades. A single individual may have been associated with the purchase of the land and/or layout of the community, though he/she would have had a limited role in the construction of buildings or community infrastructure. In contrast, a development is a completed real estate improvement project, including buildings, landscaping, and infrastructure, constructed by a single developer during a distinct timeframe.

Further distinctions developed for the purposes of this report include the division of community types into Unplanned Suburban Neighborhoods, Planned Suburban Neighborhoods, and Planned Suburban Developments. The Unplanned Suburban Neighborhood consists of clusters of structures not conceived as a planned neighborhood or planned development and is characterized by various building styles and functions with a wide date range (See Page D-2 for a more detailed definition). Planned Suburban Neighborhoods consist of land subdivided into lots and sold by speculators and/or developers with owner-built houses characterized by consistent design features, harmonious building types, and gridded street pattern (See Page D-6 for a more detailed definition). Finally, Planned Suburban Developments consist of all residential developments that are comprehensively planned and constructed by developers and are characterized by standardized residential building styles and floor plans (See Page D-11 for a more detailed definition).

Early apartment buildings and complexes were constructed close to central business districts. These buildings were multi-story buildings that contained several separate households. It is anticipated that most early apartment building construction occurred during the first decade of the twentieth century in regions close to transportation corridors and Washington, D.C. Other apartments were incorporated into commercial structures or shopping centers. Early- to mid-twentieth century apartment buildings were generally efficiency apartment houses for middle and moderate-income groups. The buildings were generally two to five stories with units of one to five rooms (Maddux 1985, 16). The majority of apartment building construction in the Washington metropolitan area took place following World War II during the Modern Period.

D.2.3 Modern Period (1930-1960)

The Modern Period of suburban residential construction consisted of a profusion of developer-built housing of "efficient" design. The less elaborate styles that were popular during the early twentieth century, such as the bungalow, Four-square, and Colonial Revival, were well suited to the suburban tract housing of the mid-twentieth century and continued to be constructed. Building forms that emerged during the Modern period, including the Cape Cod, Ranch dwelling, and Split-level house, were influenced by the informal division of space and minimal decorative elements promoted by the International movement.

The International movement in architecture emphasized practical, industrial design and modern machinery. Although the minimalist, white concrete aesthetic of the International style never gained a popular following in the United States, builders found use for its functional, mass-produced components and new materials. The influence of the International Style appeared most often on dwellings of any form from the 1940s through the 1960s. In general, these dwellings had little or no superfluous ornamentation. Common features on vernacular and other dwellings of the period included aluminum- or steel-framed sliding doors and windows with single-pane sashes. The interiors often originally featured linoleum floors, laminate counters, and other low-maintenance materials. The International style became most evident during the Modern period (Maxwell and Massey, 58-59; McAlester and McAlester, 469-470).

The Cape Cod house became a standard suburban form in most eastern metropolitan areas by the mid-twentieth century. The exterior had little detail, with only faint references to Colonial Revival and Modernist architecture. The interior took the open plan of the Bungalow a step further, dividing the house into an "activity zone" and a "quiet zone." The activity zone consisted of a kitchen, dining area and living area, sometimes only loosely separated from each other by half walls, built-in cabinets, or a central fireplace. The quiet zone contained two bedrooms and a bath, all opening off of a hall (Wright 1981, 254). The Cape Cod was designed to suit a housewife's life. Low-maintenance materials and modern appliances lessened the amount of housework needed, while the open living, dining and kitchen areas allowed the family, particularly women and children, to be together through most of their daily activities (Kelly, II-151-52). Due to their original small size, most Cape Cod dwellings were later enlarged and altered.

Another popular Modern Period suburban residential form was the ranch house. The familiar ranch house first appeared around 1935 but reached its peak of popularity in the 1950s (McAlester, II-126). The ranch house was a distant derivation of the Prairie style and Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses (Ames, II-100). It was also frequently attributed to dwellings on southwestern ranches. The ranch house was nearly always one-story with a hipped, side-gable or cross-gable roof and low, deep eaves (Maxwell and Massey 1992, 57; McAlester, II-126). The exterior could feature Craftsman or Colonial Revival detail. Positioned with its long elevation facing the street, the ranch house had a "rambling" arrangement that fit on the wide lots in freeway suburbs (McAlester, II-126). The garage, utility areas, living spaces and sleeping spaces occupied a single level, usually only two rooms deep. While the ranch house did not actually contain more square footage than the bungalow, it was arranged to appear larger (Wright 1981, 251). The interior followed an open, informal plan in which spaces were not separated by vestibules or halls (Maxwell and Massey 1992, 57).

Nearly as common as the ranch was the split level, a three level house form popular from the 1950s to the present (McAlester, II-127). The split-level has

a two-story unit intercepted at mid-height by a one-story wing, creating three levels of interior space. . . . Families were felt to need three types of interior space: quiet living areas, noisy living and service areas, and sleeping areas. . . . The lower level usually housed the garage and, commonly, the "noisy" family room with its television. The mid-level wing contained the "quiet" living areas (kitchen, dining and living rooms) and the upper level, the bedrooms (Ibid.)

The split-level had the same types of spaces as the ranch house but followed a more compact plan. Split-level houses typically had brick lower stories, frame upper stories, and Colonial Revival detail.

Another residential style constructed during the Modern Period was the Art Moderne, though relatively few examples of this style were constructed in the suburbs. The Art Moderne movement emerged in the 1930s. Often described as "streamlined," buildings of this style had a sleek appearance. Art Moderne buildings were characterized by details such as flat roofs, smooth exterior walls with rounded corners, glass block, and horizontal grooves or lines. Few dwellings were constructed in this style. Art Moderne buildings did not follow a particular form, and appeared during the Modern Period. (McAlester and McAlester, 465-466).

During the Modern Period, the garden apartment complex developed as a popular subtype of twentieth-century apartment construction. The garden apartment complex departed from the tradition of locating in existing community centers. These apartment complexes, begun in the Washington, D.C. region in the 1920s, were often a planned community of several apartment buildings, containing multiple units, within a landscaped or organized setting. The middle-income and smaller apartments tended to have a plain,

stark look with flat roofs and no formal landscaping. This form of apartment housing was adopted by Federally funded housing projects beginning in the 1940s (Maddux 1985, 16).


D.2.4 Significance Assessment

Residential property types can include resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B and C. For eligibility under Criterion A, the resource must possess a strong association with suburban development and residential architectural trends. Residential properties that demonstrate and represent a direct relationship with suburban development in the Washington, D.C. region may be considered a significant resource. Since entire neighborhoods and developments best represent suburban growth, such resources are best suited for eligibility under Criterion A. The neighborhood or development must possess the character-defining elements of its community type (i.e. Unplanned Suburban Neighborhood, Planned Suburban Neighborhood, or Planned Suburban Development) and a housing stock of significant suburban resources with excellent integrity. Individual resources can be eligible under Criterion A if they possess an important association with suburban growth. Buildings significant under Criterion A should retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling and association.

Resources associated with residential property types can be assessed for eligibility under National Register Criterion B, for association with persons of significance within our past. The resource must represent the significance of the individual within the suburban context. Examples include persons associated with the establishment of an influential residential community or introduction of significant innovations in residential design. Residential resources can also be eligible under Criterion B if the resources was built or owned by a prominent or influential merchant, professional, civic leader, or politician. The individual should have a strong association with suburban development or illustrate the role of the suburbs within the professional or social group. Buildings with such association should retain sufficient integrity of materials, design, setting and location to physically represent the contribution of the individual.

To be eligible under Criterion C, for architectural significance, the resource must retain the characteristics of its style, type, period or method of construction and convey its role in architectural history. Residential resources may be significant for building form and style. Early residential structures may use vernacular building forms with sparse architectural ornamentation but may be significant for their role in early suburban activity. Such vernacular resources must possess excellent integrity. Residences from later periods exhibit a greater consideration for ornament and style. Modern Period residential construction introduced building forms that became ubiquitous in the suburban landscape. These Modern Period residences are eligible under Criterion C within the context of entire neighborhoods and developments and only in conjunction with an important historic association and excellent integrity.

Representative examples of typical residential design that exhibit the ornamentation of a specific style may be eligible under Criterion C. The resources should retain excellent



integrity of design, materials, workmanship, association, location and setting. In addition, all character-defining elements must be intact to be eligible under Criterion C.

D.2.5 Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of single-family dwellings are organized by building style and form. The building must be intact, excellent examples of their type to be considered significant under the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.

Row House

- Contiguous houses with shared side walls (party walls), unless free-standing row house;
- Flat or low-pitched roofs;
- One room wide, some with a side passage entry;
- Two to four bays wide, typically three bays on the first story and two bays on the second story, often with a kitchen wing or ell;
- Porch or stoop;
- Integrity of features such as porch materials and cornice ornamentation;
- Since the row house form was easily adapted to suit current architectural taste by applying ornament and various roof or cornice styles, the building should retain integrity of CDEs of the original architectural style.

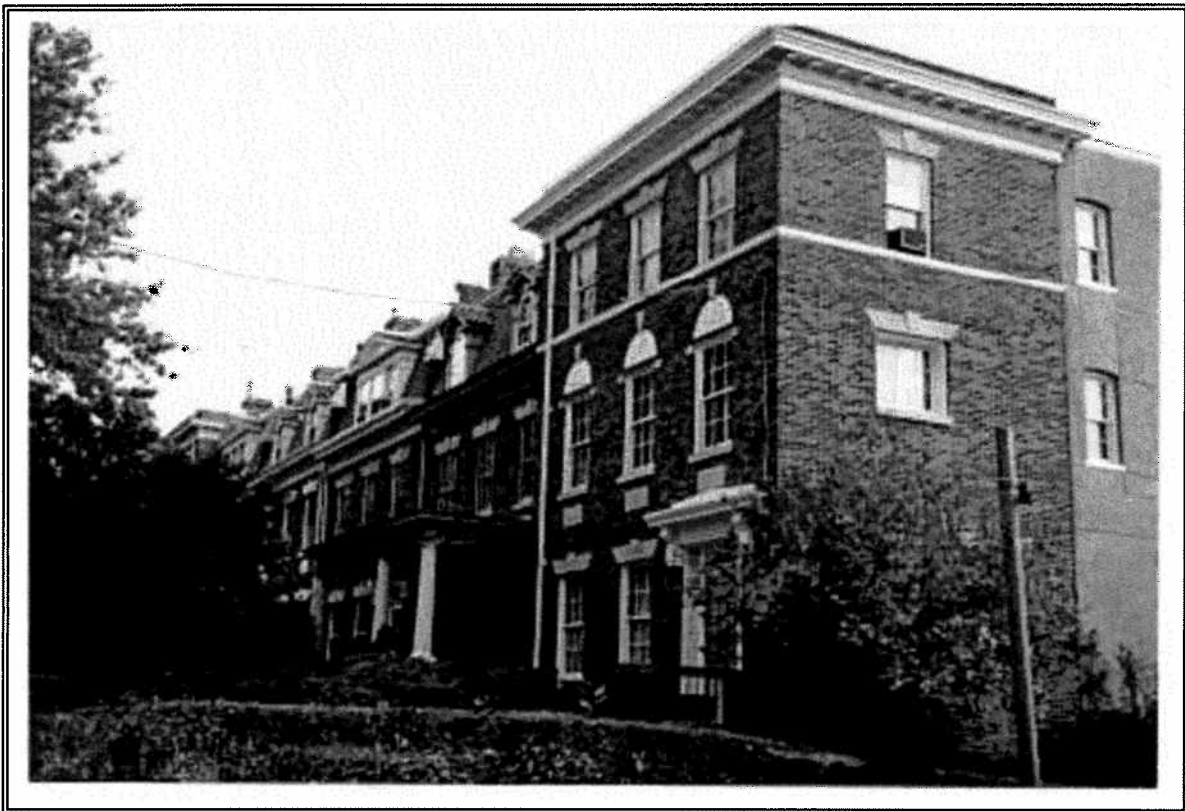


Plate 5: Row House (2900 block of Upton Street, Tenleytown, Washington, D.C.)

I-house

- Two-stories in height;
- One room deep;
- Side-gable roof;
- Front porch;
- Hall-and-parlor plan or center hall plan (entrance on long side);
- Construction materials are log, brick and frame;
- Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, I-houses were elaborated with varying patterns of porches, chimneys and rear extensions (or ells);
- Added features and decorative elements reflected current popular styles (e.g. center-gables on the front-elevation and pointed arch windows - Gothic Revival; or spindle-work and bracketed porches - Folk Victorian).



Plate 6: I-House (NW corner of Layhill Road and Norbeck Road, Norwood, Montgomery County)

Vernacular Residence

- Simple ornamentation and mass-produced components such as door frames, moldings, window units and porch ornamentation;
- One to two-and-one-half stories in height;
- Traditional building forms with front-gable, side-gable, cross-gable, gable-front-and-wing, and hipped roof forms;
- Most often of wood-frame construction, also of log, brick and stone construction;
- Wood or brick exterior;
- Wood double-hung windows (typically 1/1 or 6/6);
- Front porch with original posts and railing;
- Added features and decorative elements of other architectural styles (Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Italianate, Folk Victorian, Colonial Revival, Craftsman).

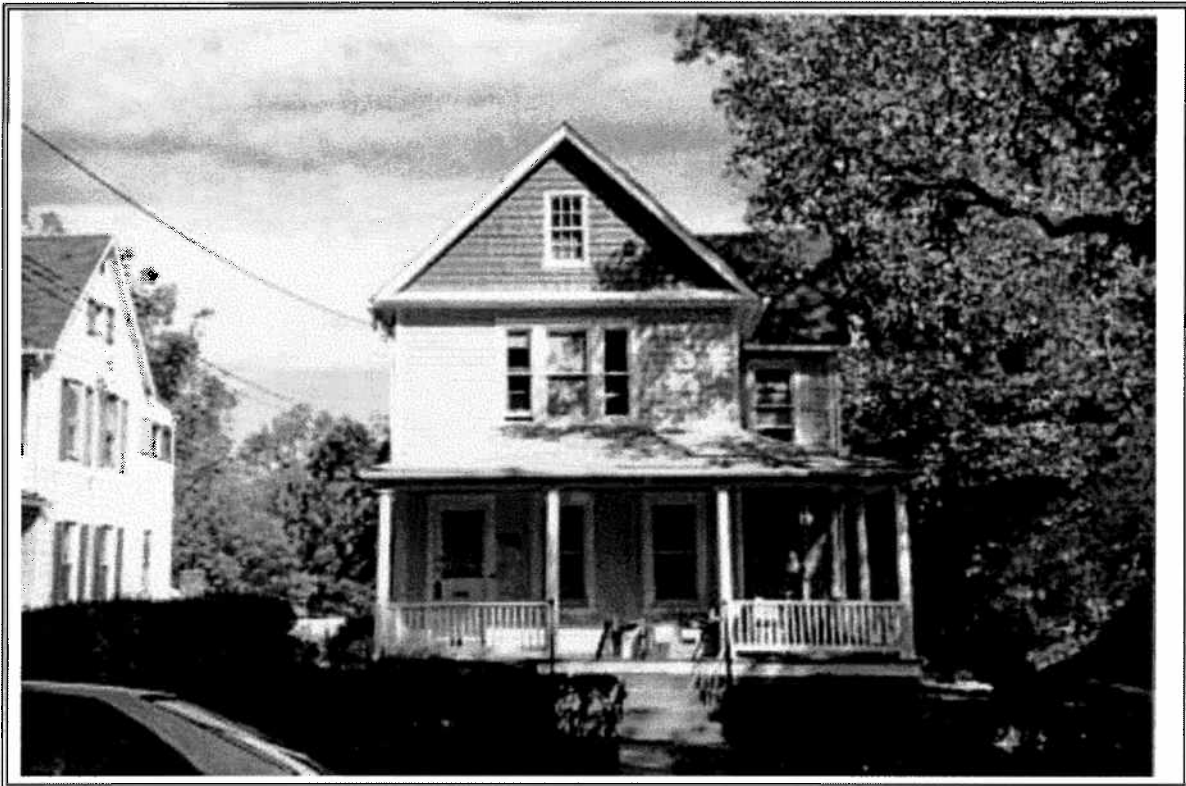


Plate 7: Vernacular Residence (404 Tulip Avenue, Takoma Park, Montgomery County)

Italianate

- Two to three stories in height;
- Low-pitched hipped, gable, or mansard roof with wide overhanging eaves;
- Generally balanced facade;
- Tall, narrow double-hung windows, sometimes arched and often paired (usually 1/1, 2/2 or 4/4 double-hung);
- Brackets under eaves and ornate cornices;
- Decorative brackets, crowns or hoods over windows and doors;
- One-story front porch (commonly with chamfered posts and brackets);
- High-style examples possess a square tower or cupola.



Plate 8: Italianate (16109 Marlboro Pike, Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County)

Queen Anne

- Asymmetrical massing;
- Steeply-pitched roof of irregular shape (usually with front-facing gable);
- Contrasting materials or textures between levels; polychromatic color scheme; use of molded brick, wood shingles, wood clapboard and/or stucco for exterior siding material;
- Variety of window and roof shapes;
- Wood double-hung windows (usually 1/1 double-hung or Queen Anne sash);
- One-story porch, full-width or wrap-around; second or third story inset balconies;
- Bay windows, corbelled chimneys, turrets and towers;
- Integration of Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival features through roof shape, building massing, porch design and gable end ornament in later examples.



Plate 9: Queen Anne (4900 block of Oliver Street, Riverdale, Prince George's County)

Shingle

- Dominant wall cladding is wood shingle (roofing material should be shingle, however, most wood shingle roofs have been replaced);
- Prominent and complex roof shape, though more horizontal than the Queen Anne style;
- Asymmetrical massing and facade;
- Extensive porches (second story balconies);
- Use of dormers, such as curved hipped and eyebrow;
- Minimal exterior ornamentation.

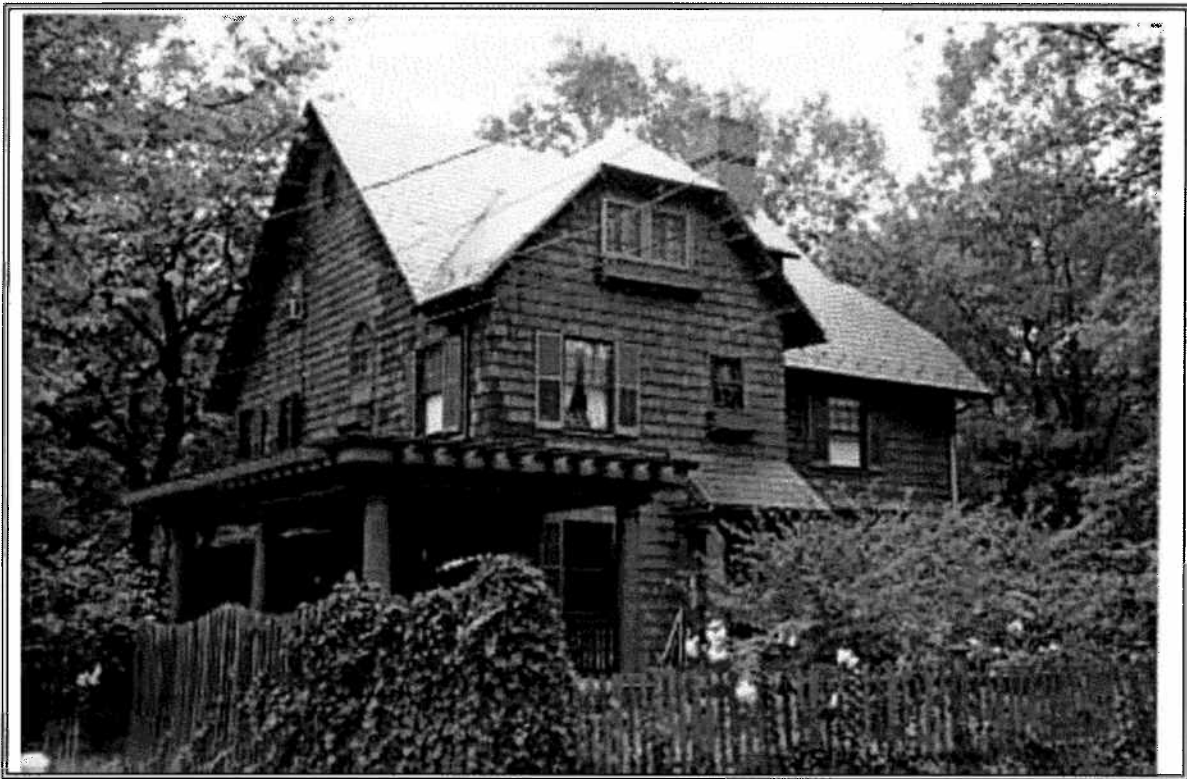


Plate 10: Shingle (3300 block of Newark Avenue, Cleveland Park, Washington, D.C.)

Folk Victorian

- Victorian decorative detailing on traditional building forms;
- Simplified form with detailing confined to the porch, gable end and cornice;
- Decorative porch is dominant feature;
- Porch ornament includes spindle-work or jig-saw cut work;
- Symmetrical facade (except Gable-Front-and-Wing building form);
- Cornices with brackets and molding;
- Building must retain the CDEs of its vernacular residential form.



Plate 11: Folk Victorian (10802 Kenilworth Avenue, Garrett Park, Montgomery County)

Colonial Revival

- Balanced, symmetrical facade;
- Two-stories in height (one-story examples are not as common);
- Side-gable roof (most common), also gambrel roof and hipped roof;
- Siding materials of brick, stone and/or wood clapboard;
- Brick examples can utilize stringcourses and cornices;
- Use of decorative door crowns and pediments, side-lights, fanlights and porticos to emphasize the front entrance;
- Double-hung windows with multiple lights in one or both sashes (6/6 double-hung windows are most common); Wood shutters;
- Front entry can have a stoop of brick or concrete; bracketed hood; pedimented porch with columns; or full-width hipped or shed roof porch;
- Decorative cornice (use of dentil molding);
- Formal front yard and informal rear yard with patios, terrace or porch;
- Massive chimney(s);
- Some examples have pent roof between first and second stories of front elevation;
- Common features of the Colonial Revival-style applied to suburban houses of the twentieth century include: symmetrical fenestration, side-gable roof, small entry porch, pedimented door surround, double-hung windows and wood shutters.

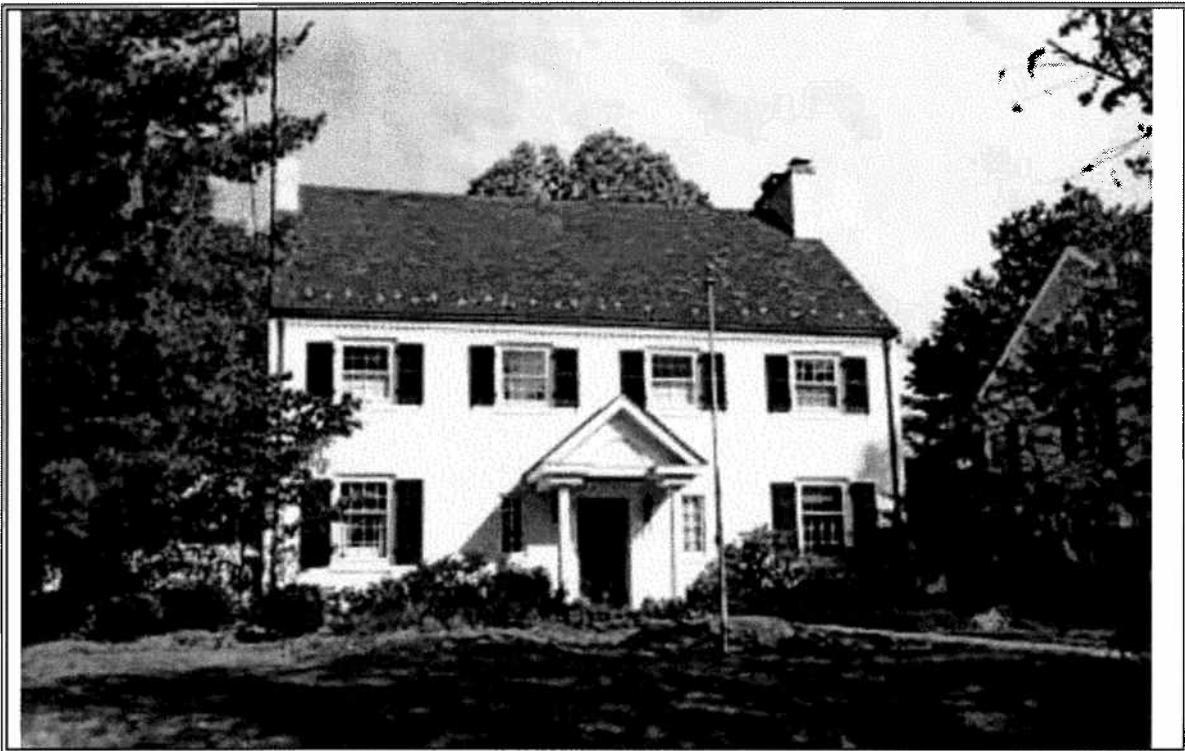


Plate 12: Colonial Revival (3945 Linnean Avenue, Forest Hills, Washington, D.C.)

Tudor Revival

- Asymmetrical massing;
- Steeply pitched roofs;
- Cross-gable roof or side-gable with an off-center front-gable;
- Gabled entryway;
- Multi-light narrow windows, banded casement or double-hung;
- Dominant, massive chimneys;
- Masonry construction or use of veneering techniques;
- Decorative half-timbering;
- Common features of the Tudor Revival-style applied to small suburban houses of the twentieth century include: asymmetrical fenestration, steeply pitched roof, cross-gable roof or side-gable roof with off-center front-gable and/or dormers, dominant brick chimney sometimes located on the front elevation, exterior material of brick, frame or stucco, multi-light metal casement windows.

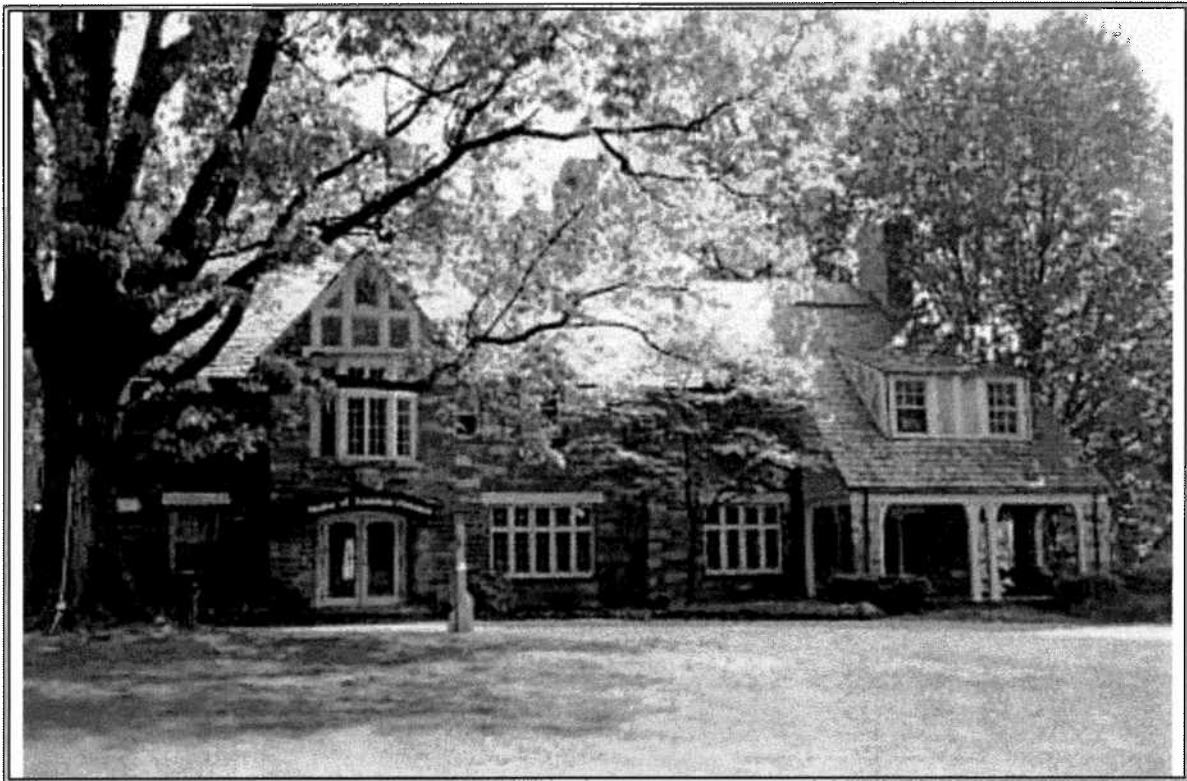


Plate 13: Tudor Revival (5400 Grosvenor Lane, Grosvenor, Montgomery County)

Four-Square

- 2 to 2½ stories;
- Low-pitched hipped roof (pyramidal hipped roof);
- Two or three bays wide, two rooms deep;
- Low full-width, hipped roof front porch (sometimes shed roof, one-story in height);
- Off-center entrance;
- Dormer on at least one elevation;
- Double-hung windows (1/1, 3/1 or 6/6 double-hung windows are most common);
- Window groupings and banded windows;
- End wall or central chimney;
- Four rooms on each floor, with the entry hall and staircase occupying a front room;
- Construction materials consist of wood-frame, brick, stone or concrete block;
- Applied ornament from the Craftsman/Prairie, Colonial Revival and Italianate styles.



Plate 14: Four-Square (13808 Old Columbia Pike, Fairland, Montgomery County)

Bungalow

- One-and-one-half stories in height;
- Low pitched hipped roof or broad gables;
- Integral porches with battered posts, or large masonry piers supporting columns, wood posts or stickwork;
- Naturalistic exterior materials such as wood shingle siding and roof, also constructed with wood clapboard, brick, stone, or stucco veneer, and slate, asbestos or asphalt shingle roofs;
- Dormers;
- Wide overhanging eaves with exposed rafter ends, sometimes triangular knee braces at gable eaves;
- Double-hung windows with a multi-light sash above a single-light sash;
- Wood front door with lights in the top portion above vertical panels;
- Stylistic ornamentation of the Bungalow include Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival and Spanish Revival with alterations to the roof shape and material, porch ornamentation, exterior siding material, windows, doors and eaves.



Plate 15: Bungalow (4400 block of Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, Prince George's County)

Cape Cod

- One to one-and-one-half stories in height;
- Broad side-gable roof;
- Three bays wide;
- Central entrance;
- Gable dormers;
- Exterior construction materials include wood clapboard, wood shingle, brick veneer and asbestos shingles;
- Windows are multi-light double-hung;
- Simplified woodwork and ornament such as flat wood trim at corner boards and around windows, Georgian-style front door and surround;
- Center hall with staircase, dividing living area and dining area.

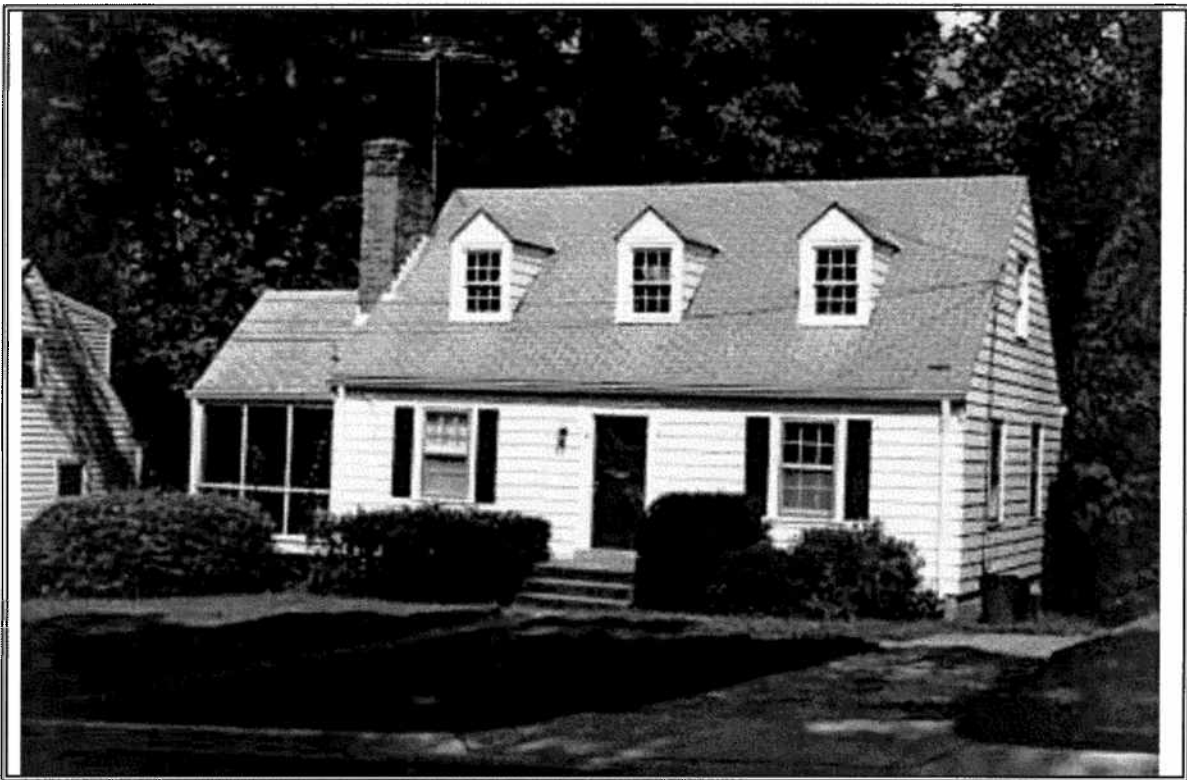


Plate 16: Cape Cod (6212 Vorlich Lane, Glen Echo, Montgomery County)

Ranch Dwelling

- One-story in height;
- Asymmetrical plan;
- Low pitched hipped, side-gable or L-shaped roof with moderate or wide eaves;
- Attached garage or carport;
- Rear patio or porch;
- Bands of windows or picture windows in the living areas, wood sash or metal casement;
- Exterior materials include wood siding and brick or stone veneer;
- 'Rambling' arrangement emphasized by complex plan and roof form (e.g. front-gable wing projecting from the side-gable main block or projecting and receding side-gable blocks).



Plate 17: Ranch Dwelling (Burnt Mills Avenue, Burnt Mills, Montgomery County)

Split-level House

- Two-story unit intercepted at mid-height by a one-story wing;
- Three levels of interior space;
- Picture and/or corner windows;
- Wood double-hung windows (1/1 and 2/2 horizontal) and vinyl or aluminum casement, awning or jalousie windows;
- Typically two exterior siding materials, such as wood clapboard and brick veneer;
- Use of aluminum, vinyl or asbestos siding as original siding material.



Plate 18: Split-level House (6816 Elbrook Road, Good Luck Estates, Prince George's County)

Minimal Traditional

- Intermediate or low-pitch side-gable roof;
- Usually one front facing-gable;
- Eaves and rake are close to the body of the house;
- Typical exterior siding materials include wood clapboard, brick, or stone, or a combination of these materials;
- Lack of decorative detailing.



Plate 19: Minimal Traditional House (9800 Grayson Avenue, Four Corners, Montgomery County)

Pattern-Book/Mail-order/Pre-fabricated Houses

- Retention of original exterior materials and decorative features;
- Unaltered interior plan;
- Easily recognized pattern-book, mail-order, pre-fabricated house according to plan/pattern;
- Constructed between 1870 and 1960;
- Retention of character-defining elements of its architectural style (common architectural styles of the Pattern book/Mail-order/Pre-fabricated houses include: Queen Anne, Craftsman, Bungalow, Four-Square, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival and Cape Code cottages).

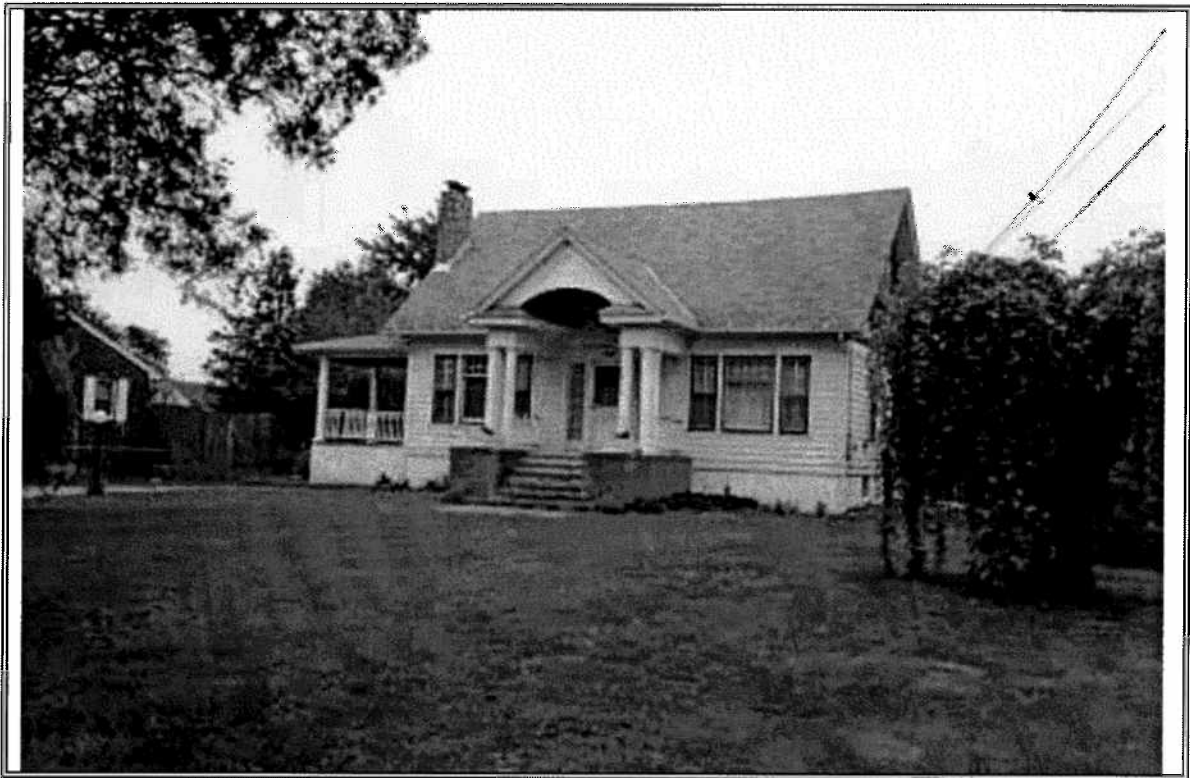


Plate 20: Mail-order House (7905 Marlboro Pike, Forestville, Prince George's County)

Double House/Duplex

- Residential building form;
- Two entrances to the interior;
- Exterior material of wood, brick, stucco, or stone veneer;
- Flat, side-gable, front-gable or hipped roof;
- Retention of character-defining elements of its architectural style (common architectural styles of the double house and duplex include: Queen Anne, Italianate, Craftsman, Four-Square, Colonial Revival and Modern/International);
- Identical fenestration on first and second stories;
- Porch or stoop;
- Ornamentation limited to cornice, porch, windows and doors;
- Structural features such as bays and turrets are rare.



Plate 21: Double House/Duplex (3637-3639 Jenifer Street, Washington, D.C.)

Apartment Building and Apartment Complex

- Multiple-story building(s);
- Property containing building, parking lot(s) and open space;
- Building form that maximizes light and ventilation: side-gable, H-, L-, T-, U- and X forms;
- Focus of design on public entrance, with ornamental door surround, light fixtures;
- Original siding, windows and doors;
- Retention of character-defining elements of its architectural style (such as Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Moderne, International);
- Apartment complexes: integration of landscape design into overall plan.



Plate 22: Apartment Building (Belvedere Apartments, 2105 Belvedere Boulevard, Forest Glen, Montgomery County)