

MEMORANDUM

June 7, 2023

TO: Planning, Housing, and Parks (PHP) Committee

FROM: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: **Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Edward U. Taylor Elementary School and Weller's Dry Cleaning**

PURPOSE: Review the proposed amendments to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Participants:

Tanya Stern, Acting Director, Montgomery Planning Department
Jason Sartori, Chief, Countywide Planning and Policy Division, Planning Department
Rebecca Ballo, Supervisor for Historic Preservation, Planning Department
John Liebertz, Historic Preservation Planner Coordinator, Planning Department

The worksession will start with a presentation by Planning Staff on the Planning Board's recommendation for two proposed amendments to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The Committee will then review each of the amendments. However, before evaluating the specifics of each amendment, a brief summary of the two primary mechanisms by which historic resources may be preserved, and the Council's role in the process, is laid out below.

Background

In 1976, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) created the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites, which identifies resources that are potentially historic. Placement on the Locational Atlas provides interim protection¹ to historic resources until they are designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The Planning Board has the sole authority to add resources to the Locational Atlas².

In 1979, the County Council adopted the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 24A). The Master Plan for Historic Preservation is the County's preservation planning document. It includes the list of all officially designated historic sites and districts. Historic resources which have been added to the Master Plan have been found to be of special historic or architectural significance and therefore merit protection under the Historic Preservation

¹ From demolition or "substantial alteration"

² The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), appointed by the County Executive, reviews and makes recommendations on potential listing to the Locational Atlas.

Ordinance. The County Council makes the final decision on the designation of historic sites and districts via an amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

The recommendations of the Planning Board are guided by Chapter 24A. Under this chapter, the Board is directed to apply the following criteria:

In considering historic resources for designation as historic sites or historic districts, the Planning Board shall apply the following criteria:

- (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.
- (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.

These criteria are referenced by number and letter in recommendations by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to the Planning Board, and in the Planning Board's recommendation to the Council. The code does not specify a minimum number of criteria that must be met. Nor does the code require the Planning Board to consider ownership, alterations from the original construction, or National Register Eligibility.

There is no County or State law that mandates the designation of historic resources. Chapter 24A requires the Planning Board to apply historic criteria in making its recommendation to the Council, but it does not bind the Council to adopt resources that meet the above noted criteria.

The designation of historic resources occurs by the adoption of an amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The purpose of all master plans, including the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, is found in the State code, Land Use Article §21-101(b):

- 1) guide and accomplish a coordinated, comprehensive, adjusted, and systematic development of the regional district;
- 2) coordinate and adjust the development of the regional district with public and private development of other parts of the State and of the District of Columbia; and
- 3) protect and promote public health, safety, and welfare.

In addition to the guidance provided by the purpose of all master plans is the purpose provided for Chapter 24A:

It is the purpose of this chapter to provide for the identification, designation, and regulation, for purposes of protection, preservation and continued use and enhancement, of those sites, structures with their appurtenances and environmental settings, and districts of historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value in that portion of the county which is within the Maryland-Washington Regional District. Its further purpose is to preserve and enhance the quality of life in the county,

safeguard the historical and cultural heritage of the county, strengthen the local economy, stabilize and improve property values in and around such historical areas, foster civic beauty and to preserve continued utilization and pleasure of the citizens of the county, the state, and the United States of America.

Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Edward U. Taylor Elementary School

The Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation for the Edward U. Taylor School contains the text and supporting documentation for an amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County, Maryland (1979), as amended; the MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan (2019), as amended; and Thrive Montgomery 2050 (2022), as amended.

The Planning Board Draft Amendment for the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School covers a seven-acre property in Boyds that includes the school building, two baseball fields, and various outbuildings. In 1952, the Board of Education built the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School, located at 19501 White Ground Road, approximately one mile southwest of Boyds. The school's history is representative of 1) the closure and consolidation of one-room and two-room Black elementary schools in the mid-20th century prior to desegregation; 2) sustained advocacy for modern school facilities and pressure applied from state and national litigation against the "separate but equal" doctrine; 3) the desegregation of Montgomery County's school system; and 4) the burden placed on the Black community to achieve the desegregation policies set forth by the county. The Taylor School provides a unique opportunity to protect a cultural landscape that documents the progression of school design for Black residents and recognizes a significant educational landmark for Black residents in the county during the mid-20th Century.

The Planning Board (5-0) found that the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School meets three Designation Criteria³ as listed in Chapter 24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code and recommended the Council designate the former Taylor school as historic. The Board also moved to list the Edward U. Taylor School to the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites. This listing on the Planning Board's Atlas protects the property from any substantial alterations while the Council considers the Master Plan Amendment to list the property as an historic site. Montgomery County Public Schools, the owner of the site, supports the designation.

As part of the Planning Board's motion, the Board suggested that the Council should consider designating a smaller section of the parcel as the environmental setting rather than designating the entire area (building and property) as shown in the amendment as submitted. The Board felt that a smaller area would preserve the important characteristics of this site but allow for unencumbered alterations to the athletic field that is located within the environmental setting proposed by the Historic Preservation Commission. Items discussed included the importance of the viewsheds from along White Ground Road and from the Boyds Negro School across the street, and the need to ensure that any adjacent new construction is compatible with the historic school building. Staff told the Board that there were no contributing out-buildings on the site. As such, the recommendation of the HPC to regulate contributing out-building was amended accordingly.

The Council held a public hearing on the Amendment on April 25, 2023. There were several speakers providing testimony for both amendments. No testimony provided to the Council opposed the designation and amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation; however, the Council did receive testimony from the Boyds Historical Society opposed to the reduced environmental setting.

For reference, below is an aerial photo of the environmental setting, as submitted by the Board, outlined

³ Chapter 24A designation criteria 1a, 1d, and 2e.

in red.



At the Board's suggestion, below is an aerial photo of the site showing a revised environmental setting that excludes athletic fields and retains a protected view from White Ground Road and the Boyds Negro School (circled in orange) across the street.



Council Staff recommends the Committee support the amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation for the Edward U. Taylor School, including the designation of a smaller section of the parcel as the environmental setting rather than the entire area (building and property) as shown in the amendment as submitted.

If the Committee supports a revised environmental setting, Council staff will work with Planning staff to finalize references to and illustrations of the environmental setting in the final draft Amendment.

Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Weller's Dry Cleaning

In addition to the amendment for the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School, the Planning Board, at its meeting on February 23, 2023, also considered an amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation for Weller's Dry Cleaning.

An amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation for Weller's Dry Cleaning would cover a 9,376 square-foot site in Silver Spring that includes the former Weller's Dry Cleaning building, an adjacent paved asphalt parking lot, and a roadside commercial sign. The Googie-styled Weller's Dry Cleaning store and associated sign were built by the Weller brothers in 1961 within the Thayer Avenue commercial area in Downtown Silver Spring. The Googie style is a popular, but relatively rare, mid-twentieth century roadside commercial architecture, a subset of the Modern Movement of architecture. The style was first popularized in California, where the intention was to attract motorists traveling at 35 miles per hour or more to stop and patronize roadside businesses through building design that uses bold shapes, colors, and glass, as well as iconic upswept or cantilevered roofs. Relatively few examples of this architectural style remain intact in the county or region.

The site was originally identified for evaluation as a historic resource over twenty years ago in the "2002 Historic Sites Survey Report: Silver Spring Central Business District". Similarly, the 2022 Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan includes a recommendation to study Weller's Dry Cleaning for potential future listing in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and to encourage the adaptive reuse of the building if the occupant and use change. The Historic Preservation Commission held public hearings and worksessions in 2022 for the Weller's building, site, and sign. The HPC found the former Weller's Dry Cleaning site to meet two Designation Criteria⁴ as listed in Chapter 24A.

Ultimately, the Board (3-2) found that the Weller's site did not meet the designation criteria for listing to the Locational Atlas, nor did it meet the criteria for amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The site is privately owned, and the current owners are not supportive of the master plan designation.

Given the Board's decision, it is unusual for the proposed amendment to be considered by the Council. Historic resources proposed for amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation can be evaluated either as part of an area master plan or as a stand-alone amendment. On average, it seems, the Council has been more conservative in its designation of historic resources than the Planning Board, and the Planning Board more conservative than the HPC⁵.

One reason for this dynamic may be that the Council is not bound by the recommendations of the Planning Board, nor is it limited in its review to the criteria provided in Chapter 24A. In particular, Chapter 24A includes in its purpose "to preserve and enhance the quality of life in the county, safeguard the historical and cultural heritage of the county, strengthen the local economy, stabilize and improve property values in and around such historical areas, foster civic beauty and to preserve continued utilization and pleasure of the citizens of the county...". A more broad-sweeping appraisal than the designation criteria noted above, one that allows for consideration of economic impacts, both with respect

⁴ Chapter 24A designation criteria 2a and 2e.

⁵ For example, during the Glenmont Master Plan process, the HPC recommended five resources for preservation. The Planning Board, in its Draft, recommended three, with the Council ultimately designating only one resources as an amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

to the property in question and neighboring properties, for example.

Because of their joint transmission, the Council held a public hearing on April 25, 2023 to receive testimony on both amendments. There were 10 speakers, including those representing the Planning Board and the HPC. Several representatives from the historic preservation community provided testimony in favor of a Master Plan designation for the Weller's site, including speakers on behalf of Montgomery Preservation, the Silver Spring Historical Society, and the Art Deco Society of Washington. Bekelech Delelegne, the current owner of the Weller's Dry Cleaning property, the owner's son, and Dan Reed, a resident of Silver Spring, all provided testimony in opposition to the designation.

Council Staff recommends the Committee support the Planning Board's decision and not include Weller's Dry Cleaning as an amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

This report contains:

Planning Board Letter of Transmittal

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Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation for the Edward U. Taylor School and Weller's Dry Cleaning

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Submitted testimony

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February 24, 2023

The Honorable Evan Glass, President

Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

SUBJECT: Planning Board Draft for the *Edward U. Taylor Elementary School and Weller's Dry Cleaning: An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation*

Dear Council President Glass:

On behalf of the Montgomery County Planning Board, I am transmitting an electronic version of the Planning Board Draft for the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School and Weller's Dry Cleaning proposed amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The Planning Board held a public hearing and worksession on February 23, 2023 and voted to send for your consideration the attached Planning Board Draft Master Plan Amendment. Hard copies will follow shortly. A summary of the Planning Board's actions and comments are below.

The Planning Board Draft is attached and can be viewed at:

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/research-and-designation/edward-u-taylor-elementary-school-wellers-dry-cleaning-amendment/>.

The Planning Board (5-0) found that the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School meets three Designation Criteria as listed in Chapter 24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code and recommended the Council designate the former Taylor school as historic. The Board of Education built the Modern Movement-influenced Edward U. Taylor Elementary School, located at 19501 White Ground Road, approximately one mile southwest of Boyds, in 1952. The school's history is representative of 1) the closure and consolidation of one-room and two-room Black elementary schools in the mid-20th century prior to desegregation; 2) sustained advocacy for modern school facilities and pressure applied from state and national litigation against the "separate but equal" doctrine; 3) the desegregation of Montgomery County's school system; and 4) the burden placed on the Black community to achieve the desegregation policies set forth by the county. The Taylor School provides a unique opportunity to protect a cultural landscape that documents the progression of school design for Black residents and recognizes a significant educational landmark for Black residents in the county during the mid-20th Century. Montgomery County Public Schools, the owner of the site, has been coordinating with the Planning Department on this effort for several years and spoke in support of the designation at our public hearing.

As part of the Planning Board's motion, the Board suggested that the Council should consider designating a smaller section of the parcel as the environmental setting rather than designating the entire area (building and property) as currently shown in the amendment. The Board felt that a smaller area would preserve the important characteristics of this site but allow for unencumbered alterations to the athletic field that is located within the environmental setting proposed by the Historic Preservation Commission. Items discussed included the importance of the viewsheds from along White Ground Road and from the Boyds Negro School across the street, and the need to ensure that any adjacent new construction is compatible with the historic school building. Staff told the Board that there were no contributing out-buildings on the site. As such, the recommendation of the HPC to regulate contributing out-building was amended accordingly.

The Planning Board moved separately to list the Edward U. Taylor School to our Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites. This listing on the Planning Board's Atlas protects the property from any substantial alterations while the Council considers the Master Plan Amendment to list the property as an historic site.

The Planning Board also considered whether to recommend that the Council list the former Weller's Dry Cleaning site to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. This site was originally identified for evaluation as an historic resource over twenty years ago in the "2002 Historic Sites Survey Report: Silver Spring Central Business District". The 2022 Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan directed the Montgomery County Planning Department to evaluate the Weller's Dry Cleaning site designation as a Master Plan Historic Site. The Historic Preservation Commission, the County's appointed body with jurisdiction over historic preservation review, held public hearings and worksessions in 2022 for the Weller's building, site, and sign. The HPC found that the former Weller's Dry Cleaning site meets two Designation Criteria as listed in Chapter 24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code. The Weller brothers built the Googie-styled Weller's Dry Cleaning store and its associated sign, located at 8237 Fenton Street in Silver Spring, in 1961 within the Thayer Avenue commercial area in Downtown Silver Spring. The Googie style is a popular, but relatively rare, mid-twentieth century roadside commercial architecture that is a subset of the Modern Movement of architecture. Architects popularized the style in California where the intention was to attract motorists traveling at 35 miles per hour or more to stop and patronize roadside businesses. The design of the Weller's Dry Cleaning building and sign engaged the everyday consumer with a modern and popular architecture in lieu of the high-style austerity of the International, Brutalist, and Expressionist styles. Very few examples of this architectural style remain intact in the county or region.

Ultimately, the Board (3-2) found that the Weller's site did not meet the designation criteria for listing to the Locational Atlas, nor did it meet the criteria for listing to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The Historic Preservation Commission came to a different conclusion following its public hearings and worksessions and recommended the Board both list the property on the Locational Atlas and support historic designation by the Council.

While the Planning Board does not recommend historic protection of the Weller's property, the Board recognizes that the final determination will be made by the Council. The Board's role under County code is to apply historic criteria (Chapter 24A-3). The Council is obliged to undertake its own review of

The Honorable Evan Glass

February 24, 2023

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the historic criteria and the extent to which the proposed designation achieves the purpose of historic preservation (Chapter 24A-1). All of the supporting documentation and information is being sent for your attention and final determination in this matter.

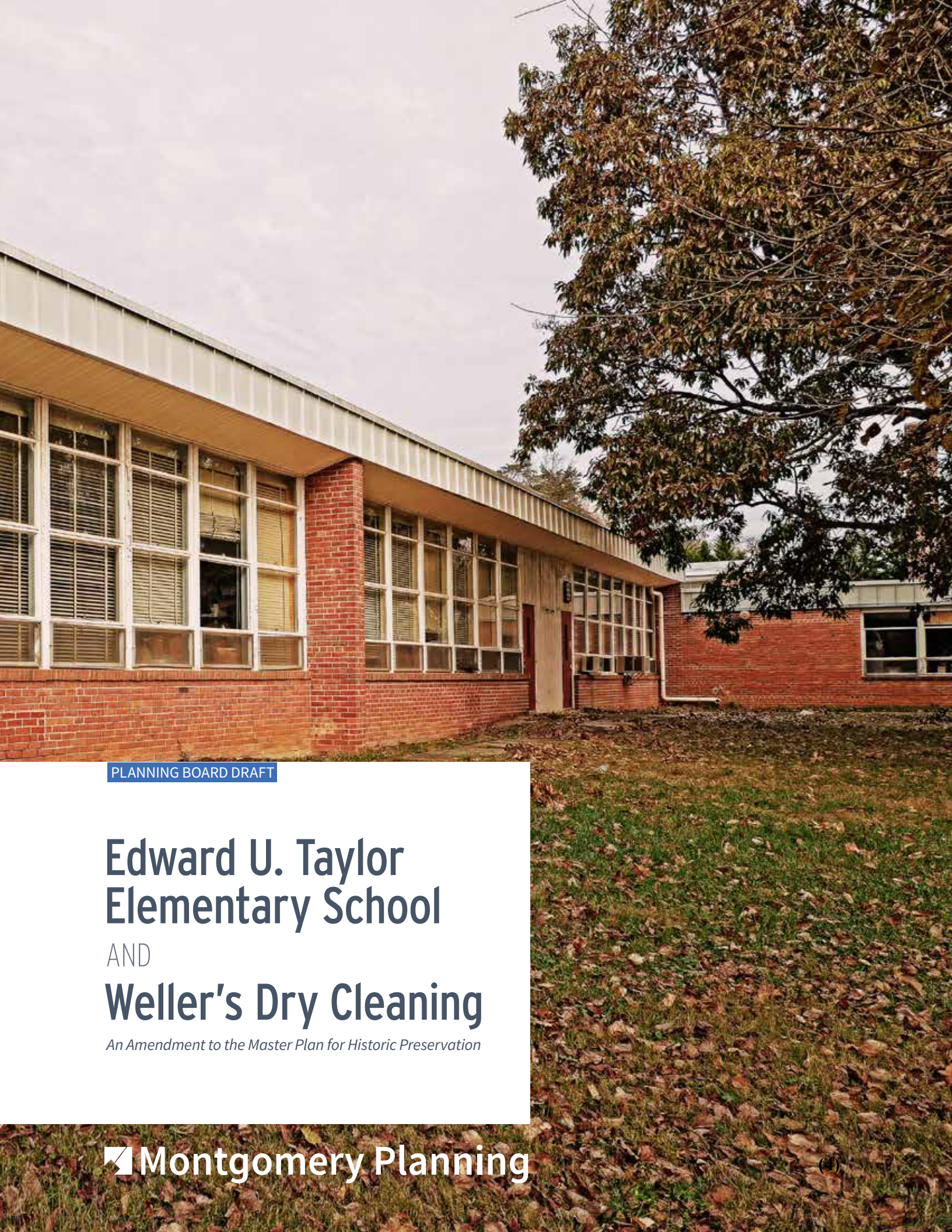
If you have any questions concerning the Amendment, please do not hesitate to contact Rebecca Ballo, Historic Preservation Supervisor with the Planning Department at Rebecca.Ballo@montgomeryplanning.org or 301-563-3404.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jeff Zyontz".

Jeff Zyontz

Chair



PLANNING BOARD DRAFT

Edward U. Taylor Elementary School AND Weller's Dry Cleaning

An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation



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SECTION ONE Introduction



The *Edward U. Taylor Elementary School and Weller's Dry Cleaning: An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, contains the text and supporting documentation for an amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County, Maryland* (1979), as amended; *MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan* (2019), as amended; and *Thrive Montgomery 2050* (2022), as amended. This Amendment addresses two separate resources: the former Edward U. Taylor Elementary School (now the Taylor Science Center) and Weller's Dry Cleaning.

The *MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan* (2019) directed Montgomery Planning to evaluate the Edward U. Taylor School for designation as a Master Plan Historic Site. Planning staff collaborated with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) who provided access to archival records. At a hearing in April 2021, the Board of Education and former Superintendent Jack R. Smith supported the designation and recommended that Planning staff proceed with the public hearing process. In October 2022, the Historic Preservation Commission found that the property satisfied three designation criteria as outlined in Chapter 24A, Historic Resource Preservation of the Montgomery County Code, and recommended listing the property in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. In February 2023, the Planning Board concurred with the HPC's recommendation, listed the resource in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*, and recommended designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

The *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan* (2022) directed Montgomery Planning to evaluate the Weller's Dry Cleaning for designation as a Master Plan Historic Site. In December 2022, the Historic Preservation Commission found that the property satisfied two designation criteria as outlined in Chapter 24A, Historic Resource Preservation of the Montgomery County Code, and recommended listing the property in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. In February 2023, the Planning Board disagreed with the HPC's recommendation and neither listed the resource in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* nor recommended designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority covers the 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 is charged with preparing, adopting, and amending or extending *Thrive Montgomery 2050* in Montgomery County and *Plan 2035* in Prince George's County. The Commission operates in each county through Planning Boards appointed by those county governments.

The Planning Boards are responsible for implementation of local plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations and the administration of the bi-county park system. M-NCPPC encourages the involvement and participation of individuals with disabilities through its accessible facilities. For assistance with special needs (e.g., large print materials, listening devices, sign language interpretation, etc.), please contact the Planning Board Chair's Office by telephone 301-495-4605 or by email at mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org. Maryland residents can also use the free Maryland Relay service for assistance with calls to or from hearing- or speech-impaired persons; for information, go to www.mdrelay.org/ or call 866-269-9006.

MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* is a functional master plan with countywide application. The plan and the Historic Resources Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code, are designed to protect and preserve Montgomery County's historic and architectural heritage. When a resource is officially adopted into the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* as an historic site or district, it is subjected to further procedural requirements of the Historic Resources 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 historic and architectural heritage of the County for the benefit of present and future generations.

As stated in Chapter 24A-3 of the County Code, historic resources are evaluated for designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* using the following criteria:

Evaluation Criterion (1): Historical and Cultural

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

Evaluation Criterion (2): Architectural and Design

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.

THE PROCESS OF AMENDING THE MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Staff Draft Plan (comprised of the Master Plan Historic District Designation Form and Design Guidelines) is prepared for presentation to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The Staff Draft Plan reflects the recommendations of the Historic Preservation Staff. The HPC holds a public hearing and receives testimony, after which it holds a public worksession to review the testimony and revise the Staff Draft Plan as appropriate. When the HPC's changes are incorporated, the document becomes the Public Hearing Draft Plan.

The Public Hearing Draft Plan reflects the HPC's recommendations for amending the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony, after which it holds a public work session to review the testimony, consider the analysis and recommendations provided by the HPC and Historic Preservation Staff, and revise the Public Hearing Draft Plan as appropriate. When the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board Draft Plan.

The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit a master plan amendment to the County Council with copies to the County Executive who must, within 60 days, prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward to the County Council other comments and recommendations.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council holds a public hearing to receive public testimony. After the hearing record is closed, the Planning, Housing, and Parks (PH) Committee holds public worksessions to review the testimony and make recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds its own worksessions, revises the Planning Board Draft according to its assessment of which resources and districts should be designated, then adopts a resolution approving the final amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. After Council approval, the plan is forwarded to the M-NCPPC for adoption. Once the

Commission adopts the plan, it officially amends the master plans, functional plans and sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

IMPLEMENTING THE MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Once designated in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, historic resources are subject to protection under the Historic Resources Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the County Code. Any substantial changes to the exterior of a resource or its environmental setting must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) issued under the provisions of Chapter 24A-6 of the Ordinance. In accordance with the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and unless otherwise specified in the master plan amendment, the environmental setting or each site, as defined in Chapter 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 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 may 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. For most of the sites designated, the appropriate point at which to refine the environmental setting is when the property is subdivided.

Public improvements can profoundly affect the integrity of an historic area. Chapter 24A-6 of the Ordinance states that a HAWP for work on public or private property must be issued prior to altering a historic resource or its environmental setting. The design of public facilities in the vicinity of historic resources should be sensitive to and maintain the character of the area. Specific design considerations

should be reflected as part of the Mandatory Referral review processes.

In many cases, historic resources and their associated parcels are also affected by other planned facilities in a master plan; this is particularly true with respect to transportation right-of-way. When establishing an environmental setting boundary for a historic resource, the site area commonly includes the entire parcel minus the approved and adopted master planned right-of-way to account for transportation requirements. In certain specific cases, however, the master planned right-of-way directly affects an important contributing element to the historic resource. In such cases, the amendment addresses the conflicts at the site and suggests alternatives to balance preservation with other important community needs.

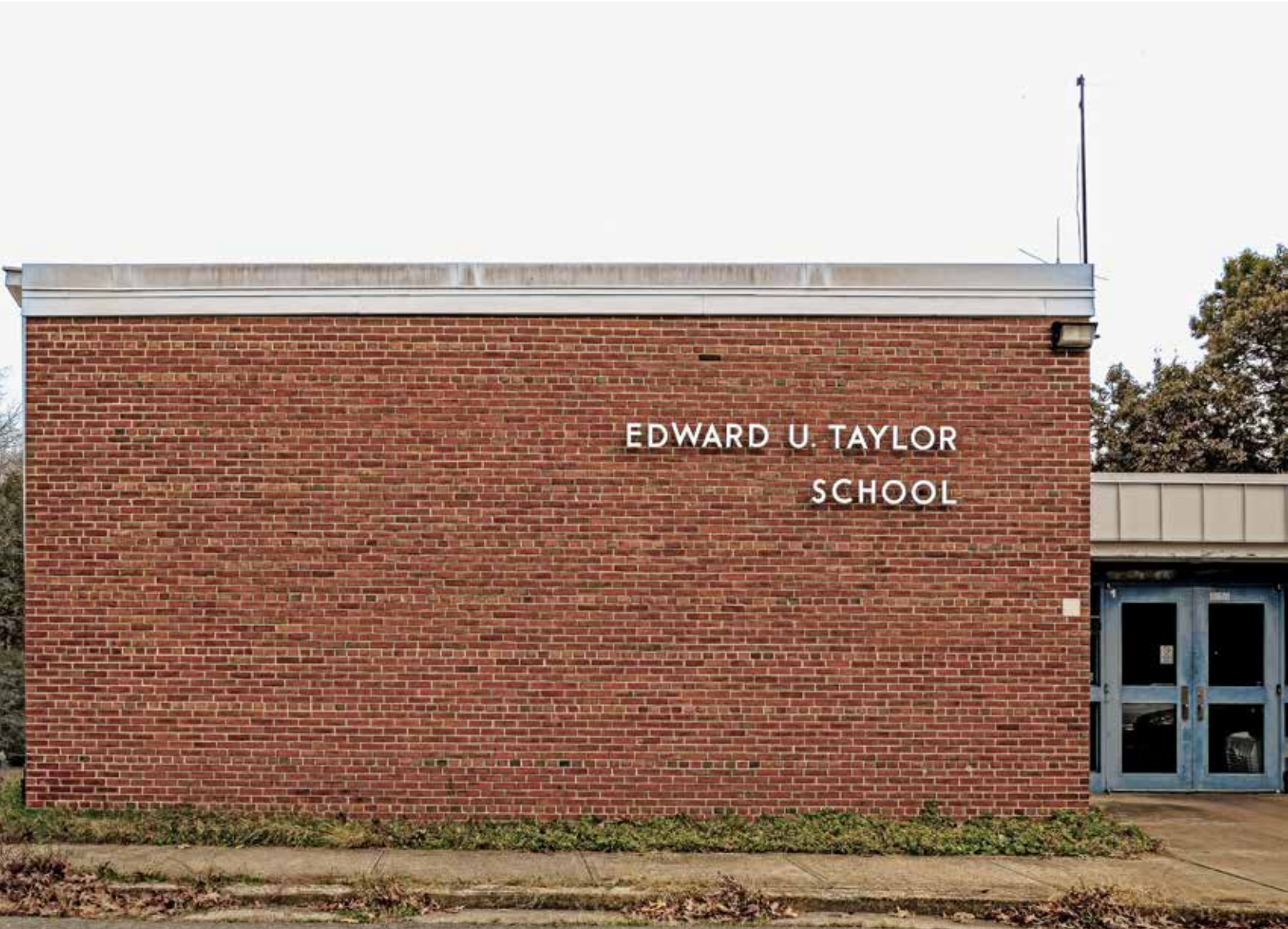
The county's Historic Preservation Ordinance also empowers the county's Department of Permitting Services and the HPC to prevent the demolition of historic buildings as a result of neglect. Montgomery County provides a tax credit against county real property taxes to encourage the restoration and preservation of privately-owned historic resources located in the county. The credit applies to all properties designated in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* (Chapter 52, Art. VI). The HPC maintains current information on the status of preservation incentives including tax credits, tax benefits possible through the granting of easements, outright grants and low-interest loans. In 2001, the County Council passed legislation requiring an owner of a resource on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* or the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* in Montgomery County to disclose the property's historic status to each prospective buyer before signing a sales contract (Chapter 40-12A).

THE AMENDMENT

This amendment presents the Planning Board's evaluation of the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School (M: 18-11-6) and Weller's Dry Cleaning (M:36-86-1). In February 2023, the Planning Board listed the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* and recommended designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The Planning Board did not recommend listing Weller's Dry Cleaning in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The County Council _____ this amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* to list _____. Therefore, the resources are protected by the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

	<u>Historic Preservation Commission</u>	<u>Planning Board</u>
Edward U. Taylor Elementary School	Designate to the <i>Master Plan for Historic Preservation</i>	Designate to the <i>Master Plan for Historic Preservation</i>
Weller's Dry Cleaning	Designate to the <i>Master Plan for Historic Preservation</i>	Do not designate to the <i>Master Plan for Historic Preservation</i>

Table: Summary of Historic Preservation Commission's and Planning Board's Evaluation



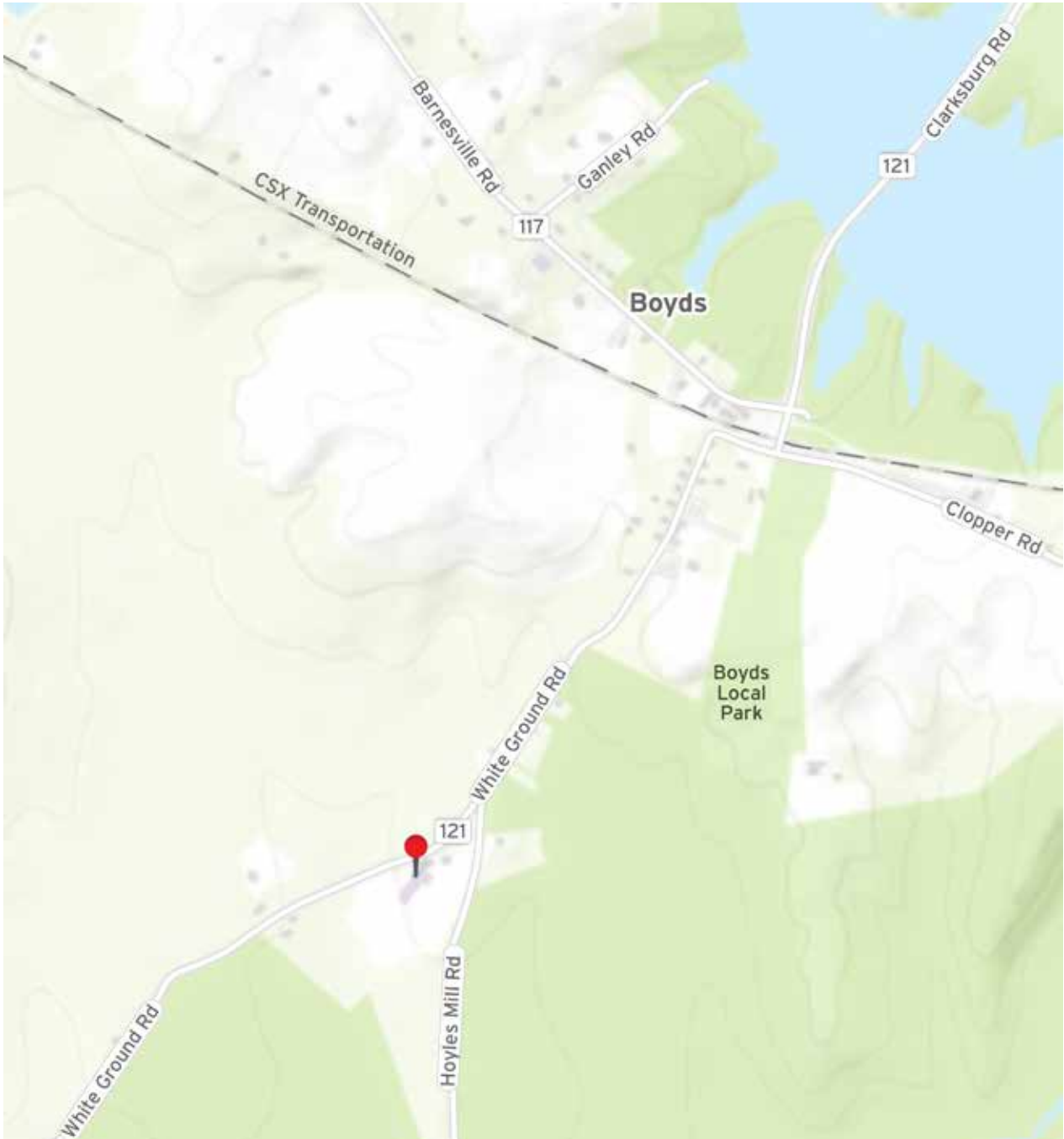
SECTION TWO

EDWARD U. TAYLOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Edward U. Taylor School is located at 19501 White Ground Road, approximately one mile southwest of Boyds in Montgomery County, MD. The building presently serves as the Taylor Science Center for the processing and storage of science kits for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The school, two baseball fields, and various outbuildings are situated on a rectangular seven-acre parcel. The topography of the eastern half of the property is generally flat, but the

grade slopes downward toward the southwest on the western half. The property is bound by: White Ground Road to the north; a single-family dwelling, wooded lot, and a second parcel owned by the Board of Education consisting of three baseball fields to the south; a single-family dwelling to the east; and a single-family dwelling to the west. The school is located in the southeast corner of the site and variably setback 85 feet to 205 feet from White Ground Road.



The Edward U. Taylor School (red pin) is located in Boyds, Montgomery County, Maryland. Source: Montgomery Planning

While the façade of the school fronts White Ground Road, the building is oriented to the northwest, offset 30 degrees to the road. The primary original circular driveway on the northeast corner of the site provides access to the main entrance of the school and a parking lot abutting the east elevation. A second narrow driveway located toward the center of the site leads to a smaller parking lot located on a former recreational court to the north of the school.

A third circular driveway toward the western extent of the site provides access to and parking for the baseball fields. Other non-contributing and temporary structures include a small playground and batting cages on a former athletic court, picnic pavilions, and storage sheds. The majority of these site elements are to the south of the school. The remainder of the site primarily consists of manicured lawns or baseball fields.

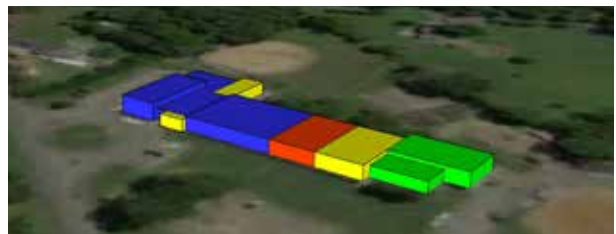


Aerial view of the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School and baseball fields, 2021.

Source: EagleView Technology Corporation.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Board of Education built the Modern Movement-influenced Edward U. Taylor School in 1952. The one-story, flat-roof building features four different phases of construction completed over 17 years between 1952 and 1969. The school consists of: 1) the original building including the auditorium (which served as a multi-purpose room), entrance hall, principal's office, cafeteria, and four classrooms built in 1952; 2) a two classroom addition in 1954; 3) a two classroom, health office, teachers' room, and storage area addition, and extension of the principal's office in 1961; and 4) the library and services addition in 1969.



Building Evolution - Massing model of the Taylor School. The original school (1952) is shaded blue. The two-classroom addition (1954) is shaded orange. The extension of the principal's office near the main entrance, teacher's lounge and health room on the rear elevation, and two-classroom addition are shaded yellow (1961). The library and services wing is shaded green (1969). Source: Montgomery Planning.

(13)



Taylor School - View of the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School, 2019.

Source: Montgomery Planning.

The architecture firm of McLeod & Ferrara designed the original school. The building, completed in 1952, consists of three distinct massings: the auditorium to the east, entrance hall with principal's office and kitchen in the center, and classroom wing to the west.

While all three sections are one story, the heights differ—the taller auditorium with clerestory windows anchors the design, followed by the classroom wing, and the shorter entrance hall. The entrance hall has an L-shaped form that wraps the multi-purpose room/auditorium.

The original school rests on a continuous concrete foundation and features a concrete block structural system with a seven-course, common bond, brick veneer. The walls support a flat roof that features non-historic metal coping on the auditorium and seamed metal fascia on the remainder of the building. Fenestration primarily includes: 1) non-historic, double-leaf, metal-framed glass doors; 2) replacement single-leaf aluminum doors; and 3) original vertical three-light, four-light and five-light ribbons of metal-

sash windows. The windows feature brick sills. Many of the wood lintels are no longer visible as they are obscured beneath the non-historic metal cornice.

Major additions were added primarily to the western extent of the school as an extension to the classroom wing. The first two classroom additions built in 1954 and 1961 seamlessly retained and matched the original design, fenestration, and materials.



View of the auditorium, 2019.

Source: Montgomery Planning

The third addition, the library and services wing built in 1969, incorporated a new form but the design components were complimentary to the historic building. This one-story addition with a partially exposed basement takes advantage of the change in grade to permit direct access to basement storage from the west elevation. The addition rests on a

partially excavated concrete foundation. The concrete block structural system with a five-course, common-bond, brick veneer supports a flat roof. The roof has the same non-historic seamed metal cornice as the rest of the building. Fenestration consists of vertical three-light and five-light metal-sash windows and single-leaf and double-leaf, single-light, wood doors.



*View of the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School showing the last addition.
Source: Montgomery Planning*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Edward U. Taylor School exemplifies segregated elementary educational facilities built for Black residents in Montgomery County in the mid-20th century. In Maryland, de jure racial segregation excluded Black children from attending white schools. For 85 years following the Civil War, Montgomery County failed to invest significant public funds in the construction of educational facilities for Black students. The schools were spurious attempts to provide “separate but equal” facilities which were separate but never equal. While the 15 Julius Rosenwald-funded schools built in the 1920s demonstrated the persistence and resourcefulness of the Black community to achieve better educational facilities, the Board of Education still improved and spent more money on white schools at a much greater rate. The gap between white and segregated Black school facilities widened to the extent that the illusion of “separate but equal” was no longer viable by the 1940s.

The Taylor School represents the cumulative efforts of Black residents, individuals such as Edward U. Taylor (Supervisor of Colored Schools), and organizations such as, Citizens Council of Mutual Improvement, Parent Teacher Organizations, and the League of Women Voters to obtain support for better facilities and opportunities for Black children of the county. These efforts were strengthened by state and national litigation against the “separate but equal” doctrine. As a result, Montgomery County Public Schools dedicated funding to construct four new consolidated segregated Black elementary schools between 1947 and 1951. These schools achieved modern educational design standards including concrete structural systems with brick veneer, ribbon metal windows providing light and ventilation, and exterior access from each classroom. The Black community recognized these buildings as a source of pride. None of the individuals or organizations associated with efforts to improve education for African Americans during this period of segregation are recognized in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

The Taylor School serves as a reminder of the final stages of the desegregation plan enacted in

Montgomery County following the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954). One of the last county schools to be desegregated in 1961, the Taylor School was the only segregated Black elementary or high school to retain its original use. The Board of Education decided against reopening the other three consolidated segregated Black elementary schools as integrated elementary schools due to the percentage of Black students within the respective districts. As a result, the burden to ensure desegregation at artificially created ratios fell to the Black community. Preserving the architecture of racial segregation creates a forum to educate the public, provide spaces to deliberate past and modern race relations, and discuss social justice and tolerance.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA

The Edward U. Taylor School meets Designation Criteria 1.A, 1.D, and 2.E as listed in Section 24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code.

- 1.A Historical and cultural significance. The historic resource has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation.

The Edward U. Taylor School’s history is representative of: 1) the closure and consolidation of one-room and two-room Black elementary schools in the mid-20th century prior to desegregation; 2) sustained advocacy for modern school facilities and pressure applied from state and national litigation against the “separate but equal” doctrine; 3) the desegregation of the school system; and 4) the burden placed on the Black community to achieve the desegregation policies set forth by the county.

The Taylor School provides a unique opportunity to protect a cultural landscape that documents the progression of school design for Black residents over a 100-year span through the small collection of 3 vernacular buildings and sites in Boyds.¹ The progress in their design reflects the transition of segregated school from being located in churches to the acquisition and construction of one-room schoolhouses, and the building of consolidated elementary schools before integration. St. Mark’s



The White Grounds Road cultural landscape of 19th and 20th century educational opportunities for Black residents in Boyds. An African American community surrounded these institutions. Source: EagleView Technology Corporation.

Methodist Episcopal Church, presently located at 19620 White Ground Road, housed the first school for Black children c. 1878 in Boyds. The Board of Education purchased and constructed the nearby one-room School No. 2, Election District 11, located across from the Taylor School at 19510 White Ground Road, in 1896. This one-room school remained open until 1937, but other similar one-room and two-room school buildings housed Black elementary school students until the construction of the four consolidated elementary schools (including the Taylor School) in the mid-20th century. Taken as a collective, these 3 sites highlight the architecture of racial segregation and integration.

Historic and cultural significance. Exemplifies
 1.D the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the county and its communities.

The Edward U. Taylor School serves as a reminder of segregated life in the 20th century and desegregation of public education in Montgomery County. Local Black teachers, parents, and advocates fought against injustice to improve educational environments for Black school children during segregation. The segregated Black schools received fewer funds and were in poorer condition than their counterpart white schools. Coinciding with national and local litigation

that demanded equal facilities in public education, the community succeeded in the closure of most of its obsolete one-room and two-room Upcounty school buildings in the late 1940s. The construction of the four consolidated modern brick schools (including the Edward U. Taylor School) were major achievements for Black residents in the county.

Following the Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka (I and II) rulings by the Supreme Court, Montgomery County desegregated public school facilities between 1955 and 1961. The Edward U. Taylor School was one of the last schools to be desegregated by the county and the only elementary school to remain open as an integrated elementary school. The Board of Education changed the use of the three other segregated Black elementary schools to integrated special education facilities due to a perceived need to retain a 3:1 ratio of white to Black students at any given school. As a result, the burden of desegregation primarily fell to Black residents. While Montgomery County completed their desegregation plan by 1961, many schools retained an all-white student body.

Architectural and design significance: Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

The Edward U. Taylor School is the last major building constructed on White Ground Road in Boyds. The community recognized its significance within the built environment in the MARC Rail Communities Sector Plan (2019). The sector plan recommended retaining and supporting existing Boyds institutions including the Taylor School in recognition of its role as an “historical and physical landmark.” The school serves as a tangible link between the residents and their past. Formerly segregated public school buildings are a powerful reminder of difficult and challenging aspects of American history and the persistence of racism. None of the other consolidated segregated Black elementary schools are listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Segregated Black Elementary Schools in Boyds and Montgomery County (1872-1951)

Early Education for Black Students in Montgomery County

The evolution of educational facilities should be viewed in the broader context of the racial, social, and economic history of Montgomery County and Maryland. Colonized in the mid-17th century, Maryland planters concentrated on tobacco farming and first relied on a mix of indentured and enslaved labor. This shifted to primarily enslaved African labor and the Maryland colony codified slavery based on race in 1664.

The ownership of enslaved persons was prolific in some areas of the country, and in Montgomery County, was seen as a path toward building white wealth and generational stability. Maryland remained a slave state that never seceded from the Union during the Civil War. Over 250 residents of the county served in the Confederate army and many other inhabitants remained sympathetic to the Confederate cause even toward the conclusion of the Civil War.

The Emancipation Proclamation freed enslaved Blacks in the Confederate states, but not those enslaved in the border states. Since Maryland’s Constitution of 1851 forbade passage of any law abolishing slavery, the state had to write a new constitution to abolish slavery in 1864. During a state-wide referendum on the passage

The New Constitution.		
The following is the official vote, as deposited with the Executive of the State, on the New Constitution, from Baltimore city and the several counties of the State:		
	FOR.	AGAINST.
Allegany,	1,839	964
Anne Arundel,	281	1,360
Baltimore city,	9,779	2,053
“ county,	2,001	1,869
Carroll,	1,587	1,690
Caroline,	471	423
Calvert,	57	634
Cecil,	1,611	1,611
Charles,	13	978
Dorchester,	449	1,486
Frederick,	2,908	1,916
Harford,	1,083	1,671
Howard,	462	583
Kent,	289	1,246
Montgomery,	422	1,367
Prince George’s,	149	1,293
Queen Anne’s,	220	1,577
Somerset,	464	2,066
St. Mary’s,	99	1,078
Talbot,	430	1,020
Washington,	2,441	985
Worcester,	486	1,666
Total,	27,541	29,536
Majority against, on home vote, 1,995.		
We have not been able to obtain the soldiers’ vote <i>officially</i> , but from information received believe they give about 2,500 majority for the Constitution, which insures its adoption by about 500 majority.		
<i>Annapolis Gazette.</i>		

Fewer than a quarter of Montgomery County voters supported the 1864 constitution abolishing slavery. Source: Cecil Whig, October 29, 1864

of such a constitution, eligible civilian voters rejected the referendum, but the inclusion of absentee ballots from Union soldiers in the field led to its ratification.² Fewer than a quarter of Montgomery County voters supported the new constitution abolishing slavery.³ After the Civil War, Maryland diverged from southern states as it was not subject to federal Reconstruction. The Maryland Democratic Party regained power in 1866 and effectively barred Black participation in politics. Nevertheless, Black Montgomery County residents were essential in the creation of the education system for their children. In 1865, the federal government opened a branch of The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen’s Bureau) and partnered with northern

benevolent organizations to support Black residents in opening schools. The Bureau provided rent, building materials, books, and transportation for teachers. In 1866, records noted only three schools for Black children in the county despite a newly freed population of 7,500 people. Neither the county nor state provided any assistance at this time.

Bureau reports indicate that the white residents largely resisted progress related to education of the Black population. The organization implied that residents burned a combined church and school building completed near Rockville. In addition, a report stated that outside of the Quakers at Sandy Spring, the white residents “in no way assisted the Colored people and throw obstacles in the way of establishment of schools and churches.”²⁴

Maryland’s General Assembly mandated segregated public education for Black students in 1872.⁵ The legislature repealed and re-enacted the Public Education Act (first established in 1867) to provide a general system of free public schools in the state. The amended code required the following:

It shall be the duty of the Board of County School Commissioners to establish one or more public schools in each election district for all colored youth between six and twenty years of age, to which admission shall be free, and which shall be kept open as long as the other public schools of the particular county; provided, the average attendance be not less than fifteen scholars.⁶

The legislation required the Comptroller to appropriate an annual sum for the support of Black schools. The funding failed to meet the needs of the populace or proportionally match the proceeds from the public

(Ed. Form. No. 3.)
TEACHER'S MONTHLY SCHOOL REPORT
 For the Month of April, 1870.

1. To contain one entire calendar month, and to be forwarded as soon as possible after the close of the month.
 2. A School under the distinct control of one Teacher, or a Teacher with one Assistant, is to be reported as one School.

Name of your School?.....	<u>Sandy Sp.</u>	(Answers placed here.)
Is it a Day or Night School?.....	<u>Day</u>	Location (town, county, or district)? <u>Sandy Spring</u>
When did your present session commence?.....	<u>April 1st</u>	Of what grade? <u>Primary</u>
Is your School supported by an Educational Society?.....	<u>Yes</u>	When to close? <u>July 1st</u>
Is your School supported wholly by local School Board?.....	<u>Yes</u>	What Society? <u>Freedmen's Aid</u>
Is your School supported in part by local School Board?.....	<u>Yes</u>	Name of Board or Com.? <u>Am't pd. this month?</u>
Is your School supported wholly by Freedmen?.....	<u>Yes</u>	Name of Board or Com.? <u>Board of Trustees</u> Am't pd. this month?
Have you had Bureau transportation this term?.....	<u>Yes</u>	Amount paid this month?.....
Who owns the School-building?.....	<u>Freedmen</u>	Amount paid this month?.....
Is rent paid by Freedmen's Bureau?.....	<u>Yes</u>	How much per month?.....
What number of Teachers and Assistants in your School?.....	<u>One</u>	White?..... Colored? <u>Yes</u>
Total enrollment for the month?.....	<u>44</u>	Male?..... Female?.....
Number enrolled last report?.....	<u>44</u>	(Number enrolled last report, by adding new scholars and subtracting those left school, must equal the present total enrollment.)
Number left school this month?.....	<u>0</u>	
Number new Scholars this month?.....	<u>0</u>	
What is the average attendance?.....	<u>27</u>	{ Schools are to be kept five days per week and six hours each day.
Number of Pupils for whom tuition is paid?.....	<u>27</u>	
Number always present?.....	<u>46</u>	How many hours have you taught per day? <u>6</u>
Number always punctual?.....	<u>33</u>	How many days have you taught this month? <u>21</u>
Number over 16 years of age?.....	<u>16</u>	Give reasons for deficiency of time, (if any), in teaching.
Number in Alphabet?.....	<u>50</u>	
Number who spell, and read easy lessons?.....	<u>40</u>	
Number in advanced readers?.....	<u>25</u>	
Number in Geography?.....	<u>19</u>	
Number in Arithmetic?.....	<u>13</u>	
Number in higher branches?.....	<u>0</u>	
Number in Writing?.....	<u>0</u>	
Number in Needle-work?.....	<u>0</u>	
Number free before the war?.....	<u>0</u>	
Have you a Sabbath-School?.....	<u>No</u>	How many Teachers?..... How many Pupils?.....
Have you an Industrial School?.....	<u>No</u>	How many Teachers?..... How many Pupils?.....
State the kind of work done?.....		

1. To the following questions give exact or approximate answers, prefixing to the latter the word "about."

- Do you know of any Schools for Refugees or Freedmen not reported to the State Superintendent?..... How many?.....
- Give (estimated) whole number of pupils in all such Schools?..... No. of Teachers..... White..... Colored.....
- Do you know of Sabbath Schools not reported to the State Superintendent?..... How many?.....
- Give (estimated) whole number of pupils in all such Schools?..... No. of Teachers..... White..... Colored.....
- State the public sentiment towards Colored Schools,..... Favorable
- How many pupils in your School are members of a Temperance Society?..... Name of the Society?.....

Remarks.....

(Signed) William J. James Teacher

* Or School Committee, either District, Town, City, County, or State!
 † A pupil is not to be accepted as enrolled until after five days' attendance.

Monthly report for a school in Sandy Spring, 1870.

Source: “Maryland and Delaware, Freedmen’s Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872,” FamilySearch.

school tax devoted to white schools.⁷ By September 1873, Montgomery County established eight one-room schools attended by 468 Black students.⁸ The county enrolled less than 7% of its Black population and spent approximately \$3.24 per student.⁹ Comparatively, the county spent approximately \$9.80 per white student.¹⁰

By 1878-1879, the Board of Education had established 20 Black schools with 1,525 students in attendance over the course of the year.¹¹ The county expended approximately \$3.87 per student compared to the \$9.17 per white student.¹² The Black schools consisted of one-room buildings (similar to white schools) or spaces rented/donated within churches. Five years later, archival records suggest that Black churches housed at least 12 of the 26 schools.¹³

First Black Public School in Boyds, 1878

Montgomery County established the first school in the Boyds area, School No. 5, Election District 3, at St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church in 1878.¹⁴ Henry, Caleb, and Addison Duffin, the first trustees of St. Mark's, constructed the one-room church and school building on the property of James A. and Sarah E. Boyd. On February 12, 1879, the Boyds conveyed to the trustees a .34-acre property on present-day White Ground Road. The deed stated:

To have and to hold the same in trust for the colored people in that neighborhood for the purpose of holding a public school and meeting for religious worship in the building now thereon or in any building that may hereafter be erected thereon.¹⁵

The first year in operation, the school (located in the church) received \$12 for furniture, blackboards, and/or stoves, which accounted for 38% of the budget dedicated to these items for all Black schools in the

county. James W. Simpson served as the school's first teacher. He earned \$200 for teaching an average of 26 students per day and a total of 60 different pupils.¹⁶ All of the students (ranging from first grade to seventh grade) would have been educated in the single room. While teaching at Boyds, Simpson boarded with Henry and Jane Duffin. The couple had at least four children, two of whom attended the school.¹⁷

In 1886, the Board of Education renumbered the school as the election districts were amended earlier that decade.¹⁸ School No. 5, Election District 3, became School No. 2, Election District 11. The school stopped sharing a space with St. Mark's Church in 1895.¹⁹ The church had acquired a one-acre parcel in 1892 and built the present-day church the following year.²⁰ The date of demolition for the original building remains unknown, but oral histories suggest that a one-room frame building had been located to the northwest of the present-day church in the early 20th century.²¹



View of St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church, 1986. This is the second church constructed by the congregation in 1896. Source: Montgomery Planning.

Second Black Public School in Boyds and Condition of Schools, 1895

On August 10, 1895, the Board of Education purchased a half-acre property from Edgar C. and Mary H. DeLauder for \$30.²² The Board constructed a one-room, frame school (28 feet x 22 feet x 10 feet) that had \$111.37 of furniture and 63 square feet of blackboard. The building and site for School No. 2, Election District 11 (presently known as the Boyds Negro School) cost a total of \$426.25. It is located directly opposite the Edward U. Taylor School on White Ground Road. Belle S. James served as the first teacher in the new building. She earned \$164.17 for teaching an average of 40 students per day and a total of 85 different pupils.²³ At that time, Montgomery County had approximately 87 white schools and 29 Black schools. The inequity between the Black and white schools continued. For example: 1) Black schools remained open for

significantly fewer days, only seven months and two days, while white schools operated for eight months and six days; 2) the Board of Education spent approximately \$9.20 per white student and \$2.92 per Black student (not including the cost of school construction); and 3) white and Black teachers received average salaries of \$378.39 and \$148.63, respectively. There were similar disparities with respect to the amount expended on text books. Black students received second-hand books in poor condition.²⁴ The Supreme Court legitimized the refrain of “separate but equal” and its racially divided and unequal school systems in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896.²⁵ Black residents in Montgomery County, however, continued to persevere and advocate for improved school conditions.



View of School No. 2, E.D. 11, date unknown. Source: Montgomery Planning.

Survey of Montgomery County Schools, 1912

In 1912, the Presbyterian Church and the U.S. Bureau of Education partnered to study education conditions in typical counties throughout the country. The authors studied Montgomery County due to its mix of urban

and rural characteristics. The report noted the disparity between the white and Black schools. The 76 white schools included seven high schools and 69 elementary schools (52 were one-room schools and

(21)



Examples of schools for white students, c. 1912.

Source: H.N. Morse and E. Fred Eastman, *An Educational Survey of a Suburban and Rural County Washington, DC*: Government Printing Office, 1913.



Examples of schools for Black students, ca. 1912. The location of the two examples on the right are unknown.

Source: H.N. Morse and E. Fred Eastman, *An Educational Survey of a Suburban and Rural County Washington, DC*: Government Printing Office, 1913.

17 were at least two-room schools).²⁶ In comparison, there were 30 segregated Black elementary schools and no high schools.²⁷ Twenty-eight of the schools were one-teacher, one-room schools, and two of the schools had two teachers.²⁸ The total expenditure per white and Black student (including new construction) equaled \$37.83 and \$7.77, respectively.²⁹ Despite the advantages provided to white children, a greater percentage of Black children between the ages of five and 20 attended school (even without the opportunity to attend high school).³⁰

The surveyors found the following regarding Black schools in Montgomery County:

The school rooms vary in size from 374 square feet to 1,000 square feet. The average-sized room contains about 560 square feet of floor space. In more than one-half this is not sufficient for the accommodation of the pupils who desire to attend. In 16 schools, the seating facilities were not sufficient for the number of pupils enrolled.

... In general, nearly all of the schools are in more or less dilapidated condition. All

the buildings are frame. Most of them were originally as well put up as the schools for white children, but they have not been kept up. Consequently, they are out of repair. Few of them have been painted. Their general appearance is one of neglect.

... At 19 schools there is either a well, a spring, or a cistern on the school property; 11 have no water supply. All of the schools have outside toilets. At 14 schools these were in an unsanitary condition, and at 10 they were improperly placed.

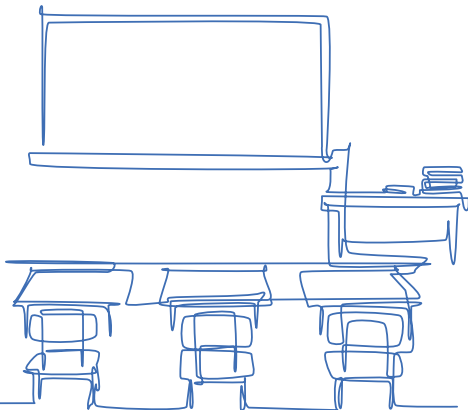
... Twenty-one schools had globes, maps, and charts of some sort, although these are in many cases old and poor. Nine schools have none at all.

... None of the schools has any play apparatus of any sort, and practically no provisions are made for recreative life of pupils. The school grounds are not usually very well adapted for playing games. Only three are provided with American flags.³¹

The report identified the one-room school as the greatest problem in the development of rural education (for both Black and white children). As stated in the report regarding white one-room schools:

It must be remembered that the demand for broadening the curriculum is accompanied by an equally insistent demand for more efficient teaching. In the school in which one teacher has 30 or more pupils in eight different grades, with the average length of recitation period from 10 to 15 minutes, it is very difficult to increase the efficiency of the teaching and to introduce new subjects to the curriculum.³²

The key recommendation of the report related to the consolidation of the one-room schools into centralized, larger elementary schools. Twenty-four years later, this would be realized in Boyds with the closing of School No. 2, Election District 11, in 1936.



Closing of Upcounty, One-Room, Segregated Black Elementary Schools

After World War I, the Great Migration, changing educational theorems, and efforts by the Julius Rosenwald Fund led to the closure of many one-room schoolhouses. The Rosenwald Fund provided money and architectural plans to boards of education throughout the nation which were contingent on a matching investment by the Black community. While the requirement for local participation placed a heavy burden on individuals who could afford it the least, these grassroots efforts helped organize and galvanize communities. In Maryland, the number of one-room segregated Black elementary schools decreased from 422 to 271 in an 18-year period.³³ In 1920, 28 of

the 31 segregated Black elementary schools (90%) in Montgomery County were housed in one-room buildings.³⁴ By 1938, only nine of the 25 schools (20%) remained in one-room buildings.³⁵ Due to a continuous lack of funding and resources, deferred maintenance left these one-room schools in a state beyond reasonable repair. As a result, the Board of Education closed the following one-room segregated Black schools between 1935 and 1938: Martinsburg, Sugarland, Wheaton, Damascus, Mt. Zion, Unity, Etchison, Brighton, Burnt Mills, and Boyds (School No. 2, Election District 11).³⁶

The Board of Education moved the students at School No. 2, Election District 11, to Clarksburg. The no-longer-extant segregated Black school was located at the intersection of Wims and Frederick roads. The county constructed a one-room addition to house the students, comprising 105 pupils in 1939.³⁷

On December 10, 1937, the Board of Education auctioned the school building at Boyds.³⁸ The board authorized the execution of the sale to Harry and Mary Thomas on October 10, 1944, and re-recorded the deed (as the first one was lost) on July 20, 1951.³⁹

Consolidation and Improvement of Segregated Black Elementary Schools

The period between the closure of the School No. 2, Election District 11, and the opening of the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School consisted of state and national legal challenges to the “separate but equal” doctrine. The NAACP, spearheaded by Nathan Margold, Charles Houston, and Thurgood Marshall, implemented an “equalization strategy” by filing lawsuits that would force states with de jure segregation to comply with the “equal” part of “separate but equal.” For example, in 1936, the Maryland Court of Appeals affirmed a lower court’s decision that ordered the University of Maryland Law School to admit a Black student as it had a legal obligation to offer the same educational opportunities for African American students. That same year, Thurgood Marshall sued the Montgomery County Board of Education for equal pay for African American teachers in *William B. Gibbs, Jr. v. Broome*. The county settled out of court and became the first jurisdiction in the state to offer Black teachers equal pay.⁴⁰



*Portrait of Romeo W. Horad, Sr.
Source: Scurlock Studio Records, Archives Center,
National Museum of American History, Smithsonian
Institution*

In the 1940s, the condition of Montgomery County's Black schools remained poor. There were still turn of the century one-room and two-room schoolhouses and the Rosenwald Schools lacked maintenance. The Citizens Council of Mutual Improvement for Montgomery County, led by Romeo W. Horad, Sr., along with local business leaders and ministers lambasted the county:

Six Negro ministers and businessmen yesterday charged Montgomery County government with "total disregard for the needs and desires" of the county's estimated 8,400 Negro citizens. He [the representative of the Citizens Council of Mutual Improvement] told the Commissioners "not one Negro school in the county compare[s] favorably with any white school." [The representative] charged the county government "disregarded" conditions at Negro schools which he said, include no running water, outdoor privy toilets, schools located far from Negro

population centers, some beside railroad tracks. All Negro schools, [the representative] said, are overcrowded.⁴¹

Horad and the Citizens Council continued to advocate for equal school facilities and rights for Black residents. The organization raised awareness of the issues faced by residents when it supported Horad's groundbreaking campaign for the 5th District seat of the County Council and lobbied (albeit unsuccessfully) Governor William Preston Lane, Jr., to appoint Bessie Beaman, a Black seamstress from Takoma Park, to the County Board of Education.⁴²

By the 1940s, segregationists and their supporters recognized the nation's growing social consciousness and increasing number of lawsuits that threatened the institutionalized system. This often led to attempts to preserve de jure segregation through corrective school funding. In Georgia, South Carolina, and Mississippi, the states adopted schemes with the express purpose of raising the quality of either the segregated Black schools and/or educational programs.⁴³ While there are no explicit programs or legislative initiatives in Montgomery County, the actions of the board to consolidate the remaining segregated Black schools and construct permanent school buildings similar to the white schools resonate with this trend. Improvements were being made to segregated Black schools throughout the South to avoid litigation.

Planning for the consolidation of the Upcounty segregated Black elementary schools progressed in 1947 when the Board of Education requested a \$14,000,000 building program for the school system. The proposal called for the construction of five new school buildings (only four were built before desegregation) and the closure of 19 dispersed elementary schools.⁴⁴ This consolidation led to the closing of the last one-room schools in the county: Poolesville, Scotland, Germantown, and Kloppers.⁴⁵ The school board planned for each new building to accommodate 400 students with eight grades.⁴⁶

Montgomery County opened the first consolidated segregated Black school, Emory Grove Elementary School (later known as Longview Elementary School), at 18100 Washington Grove Lane, Gaithersburg, in

1950.⁴⁷ The county then constructed Rock Terrace School at 390 Martins Lane, Rockville, in September 1951.⁴⁸ The following year, the Board of Education opened the Sandy Spring Elementary School at 18529 Brooke Road, Sandy Spring, and the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School (subject building) at 19501 White Ground Road, Boyds.⁴⁹ The county hired McLeod & Ferrara who specialized in educational and religious architecture to design all four of the elementary schools.⁵⁰

Edward U. Taylor School Prior to Desegregation (1952-1954)

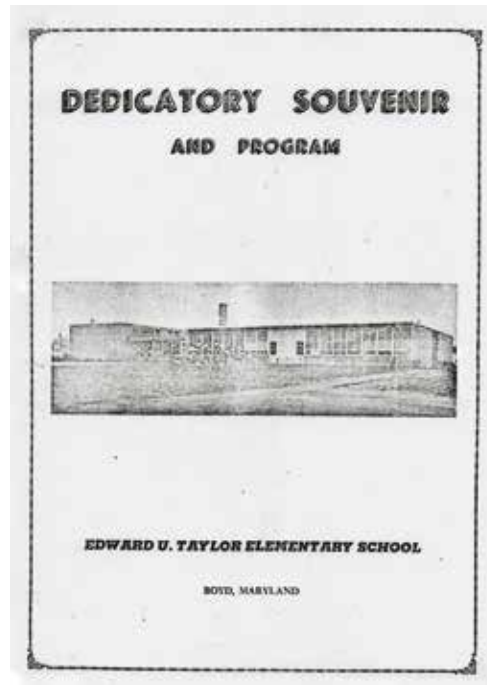
During the initial planning phase, the Board of Education believed that the fourth consolidated school would be in Poolesville, not Boyds. The reasoning for relocating the planned school remains unknown.⁵¹ In October 1950, several school board members looked at two possible locations in Boyds.⁵² The Board of Education accepted the bid from P.R. Souder to construct the school for \$139,950 on June 25, 1951, and purchased the subject 6.95-acre property from Leslie I. and Bernice Gaines on June 30, 1951.⁵³

The Board of Education consolidated the students at Poolesville (closed in 1949), Sellman, and Clarksburg schools to the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School.⁵⁴ The new school consisted of the following:

In Taylor School [there] may be found four main teaching stations [classrooms]. There is also a general-purpose room, the main section of which houses the kindergarten, with the sixth graders occupying the stage. The Principal's office, the cafeteria, and the storage closets are other additional features.⁵⁵

Upon opening, 221 students enrolled at Taylor with an average of 37 pupils per teacher. Samuel T. Jones transitioned from principal of Sellman to principal of Edward U. Taylor. The faculty consisted of Lillian Giles (kindergarten), Clara B. Boyd (first grade), Marylyn Arter (second and third grades), Mary E. Johnson (third and fourth grades), Mary L. Pratt (fourth and fifth grades), and Principal Jones (sixth grade). Betty Talley served as secretary and Grace Jackson managed the cafeteria.⁵⁶

The school immediately faced overcrowding as the stage and auditorium/multi-purpose room served as classrooms. In general, county-supported reports urged increased capacity for the majority of the recently completed consolidated elementary schools. By 1954, the school board completed a two-room addition also designed by McLeod & Ferrara that increased the capacity by 60 students.⁵⁷

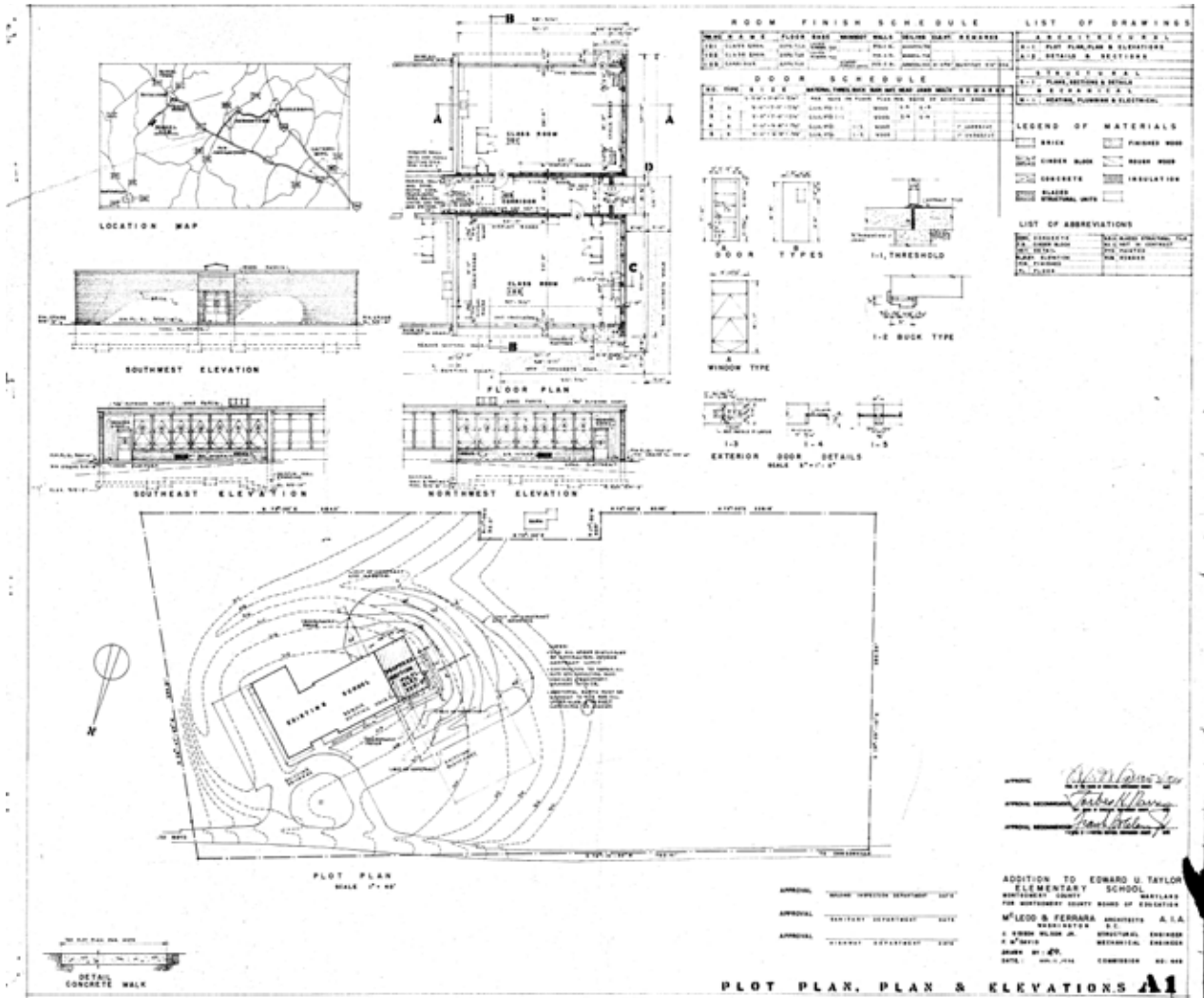


Taylor School from the *Dedicatory Souvenir*, 1952. Source: Maryland Historical Trust.

Desegregation of the Montgomery County Schools and the Edward U. Taylor School (1954-1961)

The Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* found that state laws establishing racial segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional, even if the segregated schools were otherwise equal in quality. The decision did not dictate the procedure for desegregating public schools and a later decision (*Brown v. Board of Education II*) reaffirming the court's opinion directed states to move with all deliberate speed to desegregate.

Montgomery County quickly moved toward the desegregation of its public school system. The Board of Education established an Advisory Committee on Integration comprised of 19 residents (including five individuals from the Black community) to provide



Architectural drawing of the 1954 addition.
Source: Montgomery County Public Schools.

recommendations.⁵⁸ The committee produced a majority and multiple minority reports, from which the board selected elements of each in its “Statement of Policy on Integration” adopted on March 21, 1955, and implemented on April 28, 1955.⁵⁹

In recognition of the Supreme Court ruling of May 17, 1954, that segregation in public school education is unconstitutional, the Montgomery County Board of Education affirms its intention to proceed to integrate the public school system of Montgomery County in an orderly and just manner. In doing so, the Board of Education also acknowledges the compliance as an opportunity to extend all of its educational programs and facilities to all the children on an impartial basis ...

The Board adopts the following principles:

- Upon receipt of a ruling or advice from the Attorney General of the State of Maryland that there is no legal barrier existing in Maryland to the integration of all students in Public Schools, the Board of Education will instruct its Superintendent to place in operation its program of integration.
- The primary consideration of the Public Schools shall continue to be the educational needs of the pupils.
- The same policy on integration shall prevail throughout the county, provided, however, the Superintendent, with the approval of the Board, shall have discretion to vary the timing of the integration as conditions warrant.

- The integration of Board of Education employees shall be accomplished at the same time as the integration of pupils.
- Employment and placement of all personnel shall be based on relative merit established by personal and professional qualifications for the requirements of any particular vacancy.
- School district lines shall be drawn without regard to race; pupils shall attend the school of their district unless by special permission of School Administration.
- Wherever necessary there shall be a realignment of school districts or reassignments of pupils to accomplish proper use of existing facilities; new facilities shall be provided as promptly as possible to relieve overcrowded conditions.
- Wherever a pupil in a secondary school desires a particular course or courses, not available at the school which he would normally attend, the pupil shall have the option to go to a school that will provide the course desired. These decisions shall be made by the Board of Education in accordance with present administrative policies but without regard to race.
- Changes would normally become effective at the beginning of the school year.

The Board of Education faced several initial challenges to its desegregation program, including but not limited to the lack of adequate facilities. Montgomery County experienced tremendous population growth simultaneous to its efforts to integrate its school system. Between 1954 and 1958, the population of the county grew from approximately 247,000 to 317,100, an increase of 28%. School enrollment rose from 45,315 to 68,056, an increase of 50%.⁶⁰ The Board of Education reviewed policies that dictated immediate and complete desegregation but opted for a slower approach partially due to the need for a building campaign.

In the 1955-1956 school year, implementation of the policy led to the: 1) closure of the four substandard, Downcounty, segregated Black elementary schools (Takoma Park, Ken-Gar, Linden, and River Road) and integration into the schools within their district where facilities permitted; 2) integration within certain Downcounty districts where Black students were permitted to attend the high school nearest to their residence or continue at their present school; and 3) merger of the George Washington Carver Junior College (Black) and Montgomery Junior College (white).⁶¹ The first year, 21 Black students and two white students enrolled at George Washington Carver Junior College, while eight Black students and 669 white students enrolled at Montgomery Junior College. The school system disbanded the two-college operation in favor of one college soon thereafter.⁶²

For the 1956-1957 school year, the board's policy allowed for students to transfer from Taylor, Longview (formerly Emory Grove), Sandy Spring, and Rock Terrace elementary schools, and Lincoln Jr. and Carver high schools, to the school nearest their residence. The transfers, however, were subject to available transportation, classroom space, and approval of the superintendent.⁶³ At the end of 1957, 51% of the schools were desegregated; 32% and 57% of Black and white students were in desegregated schools, respectively.⁶⁴ As the school board closed other segregated Black schools, the number of Black students in desegregated schools increased to 53% in 1959.⁶⁵ The number of transfers, however, remained limited and the board and community questioned the effectiveness of the plan.⁶⁶

Black leaders and advocates recognized discriminatory practices. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Margaret Nolte, former member of the Advisory Committee on Integration, both accused the school of preserving segregation by creating artificial capacity issues, failing to utilize existing capacity at white schools, and assigning white students to preferred schools regardless of space or program. In addition, Nolte contended that the school board failed to account for the remaining segregated Black schools in their capacity calculations.⁶⁷ The superintendent noted that one of the remaining challenges to

desegregation involved the integration of the final four consolidated Black elementary schools and one secondary school. The superintendent stated the following:

The greatest difficulty, I would say, that we have faced is the need to use our remaining Negro schools, which are good plants, on an integrated basis ...⁶⁸

On December 29, 1958, the Superintendent's Committee on Desegregation presented to the Board of Education a plan to complete the desegregation of the public school system by Fall 1961.⁶⁹ The committee expanded from its typical 10-person board to 50 members including all the principals and supervisors of the affected schools. The superintendent and committee recognized that the future use of the remaining segregated Black elementary schools was needed to plan adequately for new school facilities.⁷⁰

The "Proposed Plans for the Completion of Desegregation in the Public Elementary Schools of Montgomery County, Maryland," outlined the following approach: 1) preparation of a spot map to indicate the residences of all pupils in the schools; 2) drawing of new school boundaries (re-districting) based on location of the children in relation to the schools so that the ratio of Black to white students should not to exceed 1:3, practicality of bus transportation, and best use of facilities; 3) identification of new school facilities needed to implement the plan; 4) description of any special staff requirements; and 5) schedule to complete desegregation no later than Fall 1961.⁷¹ The superintendent stated that implementation of the plan would require 79 new classrooms and four all-purpose rooms to accommodate the rearrangement of students. The building campaign would cost \$3.2 million.⁷² Montgomery County committed to desegregating all secondary and elementary schools by the fall of 1960 and 1961, respectively.

Recommendations for integrating four elementary schools appear to be driven by the ratio of white to Black students. For example, the committee did not suggest the use of Longview or Rock Terrace as an integrated school because "... it is impossible to establish reasonable boundaries ..." without a

predominant number of Black students.⁷³ In general, the population distribution in already integrated Downcounty schools allowed for the Board of Education to achieve such ratios.⁷⁴ Margaret Taylor Jones, a Black teacher, supervisor, and principal, reflected on the negative experience of desegregating schools based on these limiting factors such as artificial ratios:

... They had decided (and they-meaning somebody in the central office – because we who were black had nothing to do with it) that no school should have more than 33.3% black population. ... They kept hammering away, 'You cannot have more than 33.3%,' you know, and so what are we going to do – kill some kids – you know? It was a really terrible experience. ...⁷⁵

Consequently, the four consolidated schools were repurposed as follows: 1) Longview briefly served as a temporary swing space for Gaithersburg Elementary School and then an integrated special education school; 2) Rock Terrace opened as an integrated special education high school; 3) Sandy Spring functioned as an annex for the integrated Sherwood Junior High School, then as a special education school, and finally as a community center; and 4) Taylor served as an integrated elementary school, learning center, and then as the Taylor Science Center.

The committee recommended reopening of the Taylor Elementary School as an integrated school.⁷⁶ The school board agreed and hired the architecture firm of Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern to design the proposed addition prior to integration.⁷⁷ The addition consisted of two classrooms, health room, teachers' room, storage area, and other alterations. Lindon Construction Company constructed the addition for \$50,100.⁷⁸

In June 1961, Rock Terrace Elementary, Sandy Spring Elementary, and Taylor Elementary were the last three remaining segregated Black schools in the county. Taylor Elementary was the final segregated Black elementary school to close in the county on Monday, June 19, 1961.⁷⁹ Ultimately, 107 of the 358 students who attended Taylor Elementary prior

to desegregation remained at the school when it reopened. The other students attended the following schools within their respective districts: Dickerson (15 students), Clarksburg (19 students), Germantown (104 students), Poolesville (109 students).⁸⁰ While the school board declared an end to segregated schools and the *Washington Post* noted that the “County Closes Doors on School Segregation,” as many as 46 schools in Montgomery County maintained an all-white student body due to a lack of Black pupils within the school district boundaries.⁸¹ This likely is due to discriminatory real estate practices occurring within the county, access to capital and loan rates favoring whites, and shifting populations.

Post-integration and Closing (1961-1979)

Weeta P. Morris served as the first principal of the integrated school from 1961 until her death in 1964. Before her appointment, she taught at Chevy Chase Elementary School (1943-1950) and then served as principal of Pinecrest Elementary School, Silver Spring (1950-1961).⁸²

In 1966, the Board of Education purchased the final three acres of the present-day property from Leslie I. Gaines and Bernice Gaines. Three years later, the board constructed the last addition consisting of a library and associated workspace, speech and hearing room,



Photograph of the Taylor School's library and services wing, 1969.

Source: Maryland Historical Trust.

and special services room. De Groot and Associates designed the addition.⁸³ The Taylor School dedicated the new wing of the building on May 22, 1969.⁸⁴

Discussion for closing the school, however, started in the mid-1970s. During this period, Montgomery Public Schools closed at least 23 school buildings usually due to a lack of enrollment. The Taylor Elementary School enrollment consisted of approximately 200 students in 1961, but the number of students dropped to 125 by 1975. In addition, the quality of the septic system became a constant issue that threatened closure of the facility. By 1977, the superintendent wrote a memorandum to the school board discussing these issues and potential closure of the building. Two years later, the projected enrollment dropped to 83 children (outside of kindergarten) and the superintendent relayed to the Taylor Parent Teachers Association the proposed consolidation of six grades into three classrooms and removal of the principal. The PTA executive board supported closure with the following conditions: 1) the board of education finds an alternative use for the building; 2) staff provided top priority for reassignment; and 3) the board of education assumes the PTA's debt (\$500). The school board voted to close the school on June 20, 1979.

Reuse of the Edward U. Taylor School (1979-Present)

After the closure of the school, the building housed the Taylor Learning Center.⁸⁵ The facility held approximately 40 Upcounty students who formerly were bussed to the Carl Sandburg Learning Center in Rockville.⁸⁶ The facility had limited enrollment for children in preschool and Head Start and provided services for people with disabilities.⁸⁷ In 1994, the Board of Education converted the facility to the Taylor Science Center where science kits were compiled and distributed to schools countywide. The conversion led to the alteration of many of the interior spaces, including the partial demolition of walls between the classrooms to create an efficient warehouse. The exterior of the building remained largely unaltered.⁸⁸ MCPS continues to utilize the facility in this capacity.

Edward U. Taylor, Supervisor of Montgomery County Colored Schools

Edward Ulysses Taylor, the son of Isaiah and Anna Taylor was born in Emory Grove (site of a Methodist summer camp), Montgomery County, on October 4, 1898.⁸⁹ He attended the segregated elementary school at Emory Grove and then Dunbar High School in Washington, DC, as there were no secondary schools for Black students in Montgomery County.



*Portrait of Edward U. Taylor, undated.
Source: Montgomery History, Public School Vertical File.*

In 1919, he enrolled at the School of Education at Howard University. He was a member of the University's Chapter of Beta Sigma Fraternity and the Reserve Officers Training Corps.

In 1923, the Board of Education appointed Taylor as the second Supervisor of Colored Schools in Montgomery County. He worked to improve schools and teaching in elementary education and strived to create a high school for Black children. As stated by his contemporaries:

He had witnessed the strain of attending school in Washington, he thought of handicaps that others could not surmount, and of opportunities that might be missed by those who were not as fortunate as he. So he constantly approached Dr. Broome [superintendent] with his fruitful visions of high school.⁹⁰

In 1927, the Board of Education constructed the first Black high school in Rockville. Taylor served as the principal and sole teacher at the high school during its first two years, in addition to his responsibilities as supervisor. Furthermore, he assisted the United Trustees in organizing transportation for Black students from areas throughout the county to Rockville, a responsibility supported by the

organization until 1933. Under his leadership, the board of the United Trustees disbanded in 1936 and reorganized as the Federation of Parent-Teachers Association.

Taylor continued to advocate on behalf of the county's Black communities and lobbied for the construction of improved facilities. His efforts were realized with the inclusion of five consolidated Black schools in the Board of Education budget in 1947. The Germantown Elementary Colored School Parents Teachers Association requested that Emory Grove (the first consolidated Black school) be named the Edward Taylor School in December 1949. The Board of Education, however, denied the request reaffirming their policy of not naming buildings in honor of living persons.⁹¹

Edward U. Taylor died on November 7, 1951, after a prolonged illness, at Freedmen's Hospital, Washington, DC.⁹² The Board of Education adopted the following resolution:

The members of the Board of Education extend to the family of Mr. Edward U. Taylor their sincere sympathy. All who knew Mr. Taylor have appreciated for many years his service to the children of the county and his helpful participation in civic affairs while serving as principal and supervisor in the colored schools.⁹³

Immediately following his death, the board agreed to name the under-construction school at Boyds in his honor.⁹⁴

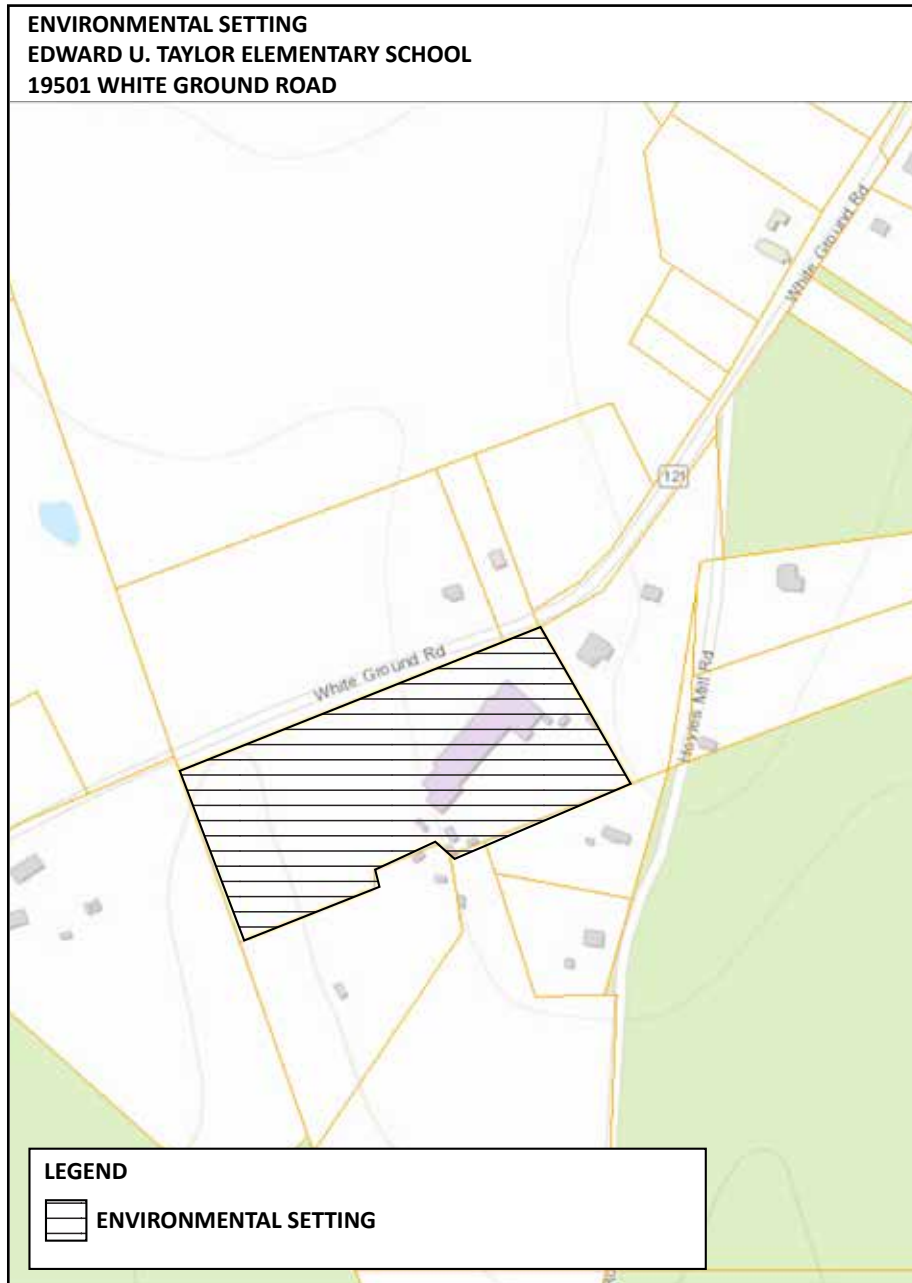
CONCLUSION

The Edward U. Taylor School is representative of the educational experience for Black residents in Montgomery County immediately before and following desegregation of public education. These sites offer residents and visitors an opportunity to understand the historic context of racism beyond written records. Preserving the architecture of racial segregation in this place, with this understanding, creates a forum to educate the public, provide spaces to deliberate the past and modern race relations, and discuss social justice and tolerance.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The environmental setting incorporates the entire parcel acquired by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in 1951. The environmental setting does not include the parcel (tax account: 00388454) to the southwest owned by MCPS. While MCPS acquired the parcel during the period of significance, the property was never actively developed into athletic fields or baseball fields prior to 1979. All present day uses (baseball fields) were initiated in the late 20th century. Therefore, the parcel is not within the environmental setting.

The Planning Board, at its public hearing and worksession (February 2023), suggested that the County Council consider a smaller section of the parcel for designation in the final environmental setting.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

Introduction

The Edward U. Taylor School Master Plan Site Design Guidelines (hereinafter referred to as the “Design Guidelines”) outline the design review and approval process by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The Design Guidelines are intended to assist Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Montgomery Planning Historic Preservation Office staff, and the HPC in the preservation and protection of the Edward U. Taylor School. The document seeks to manage change and rehabilitation in a thoughtful, compatible, and consistent manner.

The Design Guidelines are based on accepted preservation guidance from the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, as listed below, and linked here: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-rehabilitation.htm>:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property should be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature should match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Character Defining Architectural Features and Site Elements

1. Horizontal emphasis and rectilinear massing.
2. Building forms that define spatial functions (auditorium, classroom wing, and library and services wing).
3. Siding materials (brick veneer and vertical wood siding).
4. Fenestration pattern (location and size of the windows and doors).
5. Flat roof.
6. Circular driveway accessing the main entrance.

Historic Area Work Permit

Certain exterior alterations will require a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) from the HPC to ensure the preservation of character defining architectural and historical features at the Edward U. Taylor School. The procedures for applying for a HAWP are governed by Montgomery County Code, Chapter 24A.8, Historic Area Work Permits.

HAWP Requirements

The following exterior alterations shall be reviewed and approved by the HPC prior to being undertaken:

1. New construction or addition to the building.
2. Demolition of part or all of the building.
3. Demolition or removal of any character defining architectural features.
4. Repair or replacement of the doors or windows with a different material or design.
5. Repair or replacement of any exterior siding materials (brick or redwood siding), windowsills or lintels, cornice, or other trim with a different material or design.
6. Modification of the location, design, or materials of the existing circular driveway in the northeast corner of the site.
7. Installation of new circulation networks.

The following exterior alterations may be reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Office staff prior to being undertaken:

1. Installation of new windows or doors that match the existing with respect to size and style.
2. Removal of any existing circulation networks (other than the circular driveway in the northeast corner of the site).
3. Installation of new exterior lighting features or other similar equipment.
4. Installation of new mechanical equipment.
5. Installation of solar panels, wind turbines, geothermal wells, or any other types of modifications made for energy-efficiency.

6. Installation of new signage.
7. Construction of any new buildings, sheds, or structures associated with the athletic fields or baseball diamonds.
8. Painting of previously unpainted exterior surfaces.

The following items will be exempt from review by the Historic Preservation Office staff and the Historic Preservation Commission.

1. In-kind replacement of the flat roof.
2. General landscaping, preparation, and maintenance of lawns, shrubbery, flower beds, tree removals, etc.
3. Paving repair using in-kind (or similar) materials in locations that are currently paved.
4. Painting of previously painted surfaces.
5. Replacement of existing signs with a sign of identical size and materials.
6. In-kind alterations to the existing athletic fields (baseball diamonds) including scoreboards, fencing, dugouts, bleachers, and other elements associated.
7. Demolition of all outbuildings, sheds, or other structures within the environmental setting.



Guidelines for Specific Building Elements

Windows

Recommended Strategies for Replacement:

1. Maintain the location of individual and ribbon windows.
2. Maintain the configuration of operable windows.
3. Maintain the original number and arrangement of panes.
4. Use metal windows (or a compatible material) that reflect the original design intent.

Not Recommended Strategies for Replacement:

5. Change in the number or location of the windows.
6. Change in the size of the window openings.
7. Infill of original windows.

Doors

The doors on the building have been replaced over the years, but the architectural drawings depict many of the original door designs/types. New doors should reflect the original design intent.

Recommended Strategies for Replacement:

1. Restore the design of the doors to its original configuration.
 - a. The HPC will approve various door materials (such as steel, metal, or wood).

Not Recommended Strategies for Replacement:

1. Change in the number or location of the doors.
2. Change in the size of the door openings.
3. Infill of original doors.





SECTION THREE

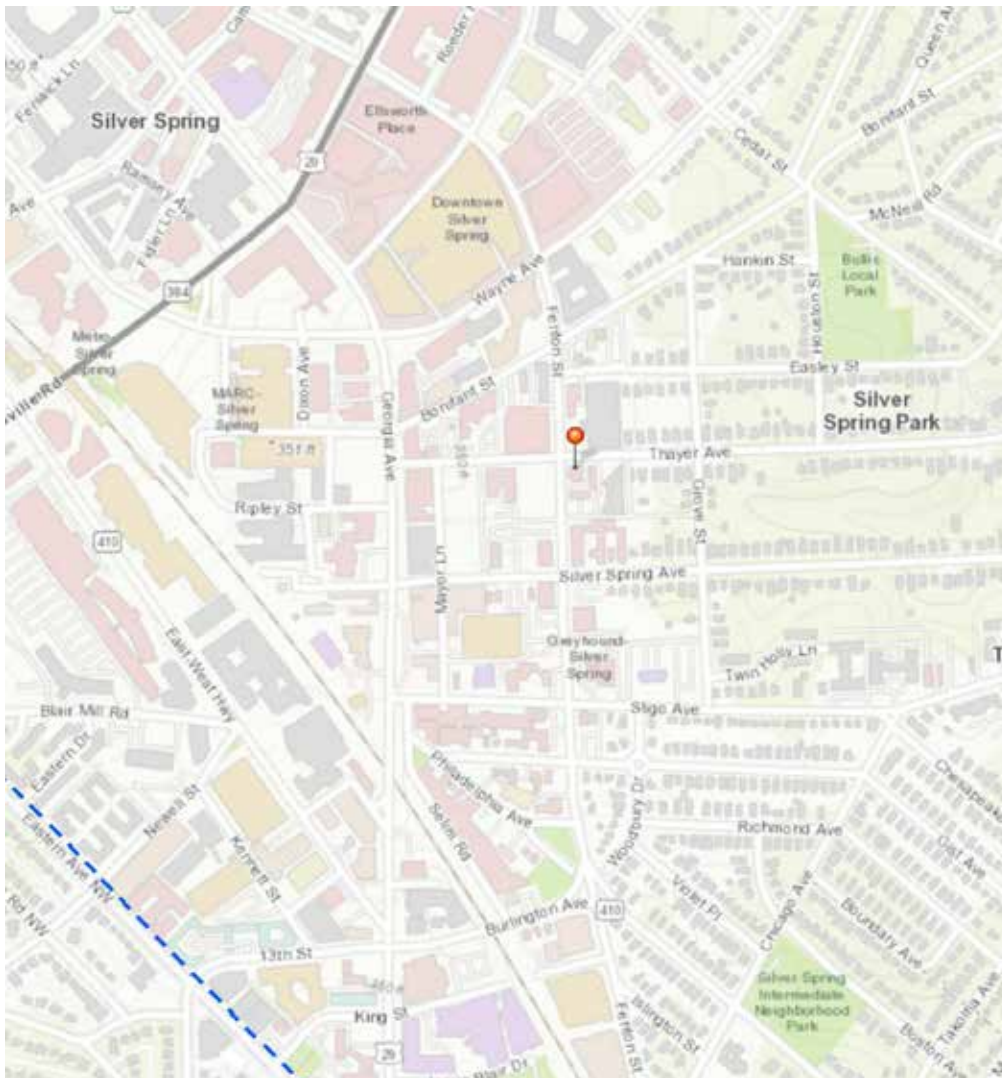
WELLER'S DRY CLEANING

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Weller's Dry Cleaning building and sign are located in Fenton Village in downtown Silver Spring at the southeast corner of the intersection of Fenton Street and Thayer Avenue. Benjamin and Charles Weller (property owners) and Ted Englehardt (architect) constructed the building in 1961 on the northwest corner of a rectangular 9,376 square foot lot and oriented the façade toward Fenton Street. Automobiles access the property via a paved asphalt parking lot in the southern portion of the lot. A driveway extends from the parking lot and wraps the rear of the building to provide egress to Thayer Avenue. A combination of brick and concrete sidewalks along the primary elevations on Thayer Avenue and Fenton Street allows pedestrian access to the site. There is no landscaping

outside of a narrow grassy area to the north of the building, adjacent to a sidewalk on Thayer Avenue.

A mix of residentixal, commercial, and office buildings are near the dry cleaners. The remainder of the intersection at Fenton Street and Thayer Avenue consists of: 1) the Fenton, a mixed-use, six-story apartment building at the southwest corner; 2) a Safeway grocery store and associated parking garage at the northwest corner; and 3) an Exxon gas station and the Silver Spring Towers, a 15-story apartment building, at the northeast corner. A two-story office building (built c. 1963) and a two-story vacant commercial building (built c. 1961) comprise the adjacent lots to the east and south, respectively.



The Weller's Dry Cleaners (red pin) is located in Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland. Source: Montgomery Planning.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

In 1961, Benjamin and Charles Weller hired architect Ted Englehardt to construct Weller's Dry Cleaning. Englehardt designed a Googie-styled building that consisted of two distinct parts: a setback main rectangular block and a shorter, projecting, rectangular section on the facade. The main block, clad in alternating red and pink porcelain enamel panels, served as the anchor of the building and the shorter projecting section with its metal-frame, plate glass windows, shed roof, and cantilevered awning provided the iconic characteristics.

The main block (approximately 45 feet x 52 feet) primarily held the dry cleaning operations. This section rested on a concrete slab foundation. The frame supported a flat roof concealed behind a parapet. The front (west) and side (north and south) elevations visible from Fenton Street and Thayer Avenue were clad primarily with porcelain enamel

panels set within a stainless steel frame. The projecting section covered the majority of the main block's west elevation, but Englehardt continued the stripe effect of the porcelain panels visible above the shed roof. The fully exposed main block's side elevations (north and south) consisted of 11 bays that Englehardt divided into three parts. The central part featured three stacked metal-frame awning windows that created a ribbon effect across the elevations. Small variations between the elevations included single, metal-framed, awning windows or metal ventilation grills at the base of several lower panels. The less visible rear (east) elevation consisted of a running-bond brick veneer and five metal-framed awning windows, three jalousie metal louvered vents, and a double-leaf metal service door accessed by a set of concrete steps.



View of Weller's Dry Cleaning across Fenton Street, Summer 2022.

Source: Montgomery Planning.



*View of the Weller's Dry Cleaning, Summer 2022.
Source: Montgomery Planning.*

The projecting shorter section (approximately 17 feet x 48 feet) held the customer service area and counter. This section is constructed from a concrete block and metal-framed structural system that rests on a concrete slab and supports a shed roof with a cantilevered awning. The concrete block section on the northern end of the massing is clad in a natural uncoursed, ashlar-cut, stone veneer that extended beyond the shed roof to create a parapet. The stone is pierced by a paired, metal-frame awning window on the façade (west elevation). The heaviness of this

material contrasted the transparent full-height, metal-frame, plate glass window walls and two single-leaf metal doors with transoms on the remainder of the west and south elevations. The glass extends to the sidewalk so that the interior seems like an extension of the exterior space. The cantilevered awning sheltered the window walls, doors, and sidewalk, and extended beyond the face of the porcelain enameled main block. All of these features turned the building into its own billboard as it allowed drivers and pedestrians to see the counter and inner operations.



*Comparison of the current building (Fall 2022) and model of original design.
Note the addition on the south elevation.
Source: Montgomery Planning.*

In the late 1960s, the property owners altered Englehardt's original design. The full-width, 13-foot addition to the southern end of the main block interrupted the continual wrapping of the porcelain enamel on the primary elevations of the main block. On the façade (west elevation), the addition featured a brick veneer wall pierced by a single paired metal window and a large metal louvered vent. The architect of the addition likely repeated the design scheme of the original south elevation as it matches the north elevation. It is unknown if the existing metal-frame window awning with a vertical pattern and alternating stripes dates to the original building or the addition. Furthermore, the addition diminishes the prominence of the cantilevered shed roof. In the original design, the roof extended beyond the face of the main block allowing it to float seamlessly in the air. The addition, however, anchors the cantilevered roof to the building thereby minimizing the desired effect.

In November 2022, the exterior of the building was painted an off-white.

SIGN DESCRIPTION

The Weller's Dry Cleaning site features an original, distinctive, double-sided sign oriented to travelers on Fenton Street that harmonizes with the design of the building and attracts attention. The sign consists of three distinctly shaped and illuminated metal-framed sign boxes stacked on two metal poles anchored in the sidewalk. The shapes (rectangle, triangle, and circle) are offset from one another and slightly separated. This whimsical design suggests that these elements float. The lower component features a rectangular box with a recently installed purple sign face with capitalized text that reads "beauty supply" and "Silver Spring." The central component consists of an inverted triangular box offset toward Fenton Street. The purple sign face includes Amharic text. The upper



View of the Weller's Dry Cleaning, Fall 2022.

Source: Montgomery Planning.



View of the Weller's Dry Cleaning (now Silver Spring Beauty Supply) sign, Fall 2022.

Source: Montgomery Planning.

component of the sign includes a circular operational clock reminiscent of the works of George Nelson. The clock features a white face, black clock hands, and rectangular, multi-colored rectangles in place of numerals.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Weller's Dry Cleaning site consists of a Googie-styled commercial store and sign. The Googie style is a popular, but relatively rare, mid-20th century roadside commercial architecture—a subset of the Modern Movement of architecture. Architects popularized the style in California intending to attract motorists traveling at 35 miles per hour or more to stop and patronize roadside businesses. The design of the Weller's Dry Cleaning building and sign engaged the everyday consumer with a modern and popular architecture in lieu of the high-style austerity of the International, Brutalist, and Expressionist styles. As a result, the site is a visual landmark for residents and visitors within the Thayer Avenue commercial area and greater Downtown Silver Spring. Very few examples of this architectural style remain intact in the county or region.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA

The Weller's Dry Cleaning site meets two Designation Criteria as listed in Chapter 24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code.

- 2.A Architectural and design significance. The historic resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

The Weller's Dry Cleaning building represents the characteristics of Googie design, a subset of the Modern Movement of architecture. The humorous and playful space-age architecture had broad appeal and captured the technological optimism permeating the country. Purveyors of the style designed dramatic forms, celebrated new materials, contrasted natural and textured forms with glass openings, and accentuated these elements to use architecture as advertisement. Architect Ted Englehardt relied on these elements to create a landmark building in downtown Silver Spring. He contrasted the porcelain enamel box with a stone veneer and lighter, projecting section featuring expansive windows and a cantilevered awning that floated in the air. The roof form permitted greater visibility as the floor-to-ceiling windows allowed motorists and pedestrians to view operations of the business. All of these features combined to create a playful and quirky building that engaged the everyday consumer with a modern and popular architecture in lieu of the high-style austerity of the International, Brutalist, and Expressionist styles.

The Weller's Dry Cleaning business featured a distinctive Googie-styled sign that embodied commercial architecture in the mid-twentieth century. The original, double-sided sign-oriented travelers on Fenton Street and harmonized with the design of the building. The sign served as a visual landmark with a scale and composition that attracted motorists and pedestrians to the store. The design consists of three distinctly shaped and illuminated metal-framed sign boxes stacked on two metal poles anchored in the sidewalk. The shapes (rectangle, triangle, and circle) are offset from one another and slightly separated which creates a whimsical appearance and suggestion that these elements float in defiance of gravity. The upper component of the sign includes a **(40)**

circular operational clock offset towards the property and reminiscent of the works of George Nelson. The clock features a white face, black clock hands, and rectangular, multi-colored rectangles in place of numerals.

Architectural and design significance.

- 2.E The historic resource represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

Weller's Dry Cleaning is a rare remaining example of Googie commercial architecture in Montgomery County. Many of these architectural resources have been lost to demolition throughout the country. Montgomery Modern (2015), a chronicle of mid-century modern architecture in Montgomery County, documented three commercial Googie-styled buildings.

The Weller's Dry Cleaning building and sign represent the continued suburban development of Silver Spring and the area's importance as a vital transportation route in the mid-20th century. Googie-style buildings were located in areas with high-volume traffic to attract motorists with futuristic design. Weller's Dry Cleaning addressed the car-oriented populace and pedestrians too. The illuminated sign overhanging the sidewalk anchored the building at the intersection. The roadside architecture serves as a tangible link between the community and its past, providing a sense of continuity, orientation, and place.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

History of Dry Cleaners

In the United States, commercial dry cleaning operations started in the mid-1800s. The industry shifted from the use of volatile dry to liquid solvents as compared to laundries that used water to process garments. The earliest solvents consisted of either turpentine, benzol, benzene, gasoline. The use of gasoline continued for years despite the fire hazard it posed to the operator and public. In addition, tradesman cleaned each garment by hand resulting in a slow and expensive process. These factors led

dry cleaners to locate their shops in manufacturing and industrial areas. Press shops and tailors closer to residential areas sent garments to wholesale cleaning plants before completing the service.⁹⁵

In the 1920s, the industry shifted to petroleum-solvent, known as the Stoddard solvent. This product provided satisfactory cleaning ability at a lower cost, reduced the risks of fires, and dominated the industry. In the 1940s, companies such as One Hour Martinizing introduced and shifted to nonflammable synthetic solvents (perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene, and carbon tetrachloride) that allowed for quicker service.⁹⁶ The development of machinery, advancements in solvents, and efficiency of plant layouts all led to the diversification of the industry.⁹⁷ By the 1960s, there were four major categories: 1) traditional tailor or presser shops (which subcontracted with wholesale dry cleaners to rough clean garments); 2) wholesale dry cleaners; 3) chain dry cleaners (a business with



Note the contrast between the two dry cleaning establishments from the 19th and 20th centuries. Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. The Laundry & Drycleaning Industry: A Study of Problems and Prospects. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966

a central plant with retail stores for pick-up and distribution); and 4) the drive-in dry cleaner. Drive-in dry cleaners achieved popularity before World War II and quickly expanded. All the cleaning occurred at the site on a well-traveled road or avenue where customers dropped off and picked up clothing.⁹⁸

Martinizing Dry Cleaning started in 1949 when chemist Henry Martin propagated the concept of quick on-premises dry cleaning service and use of perchloroethylene (synthetic-based) solvents that became an industry standard.⁹⁹ One Hour Martinizing, along with Sanitone and One Hour Valet, created a new franchise business model. Franchises could take advantage of training, equipment, selection, layout, process research, accounting, market research, advertising, and financing while retaining their independence.¹⁰⁰ The One Hour Martinizing slogan “The Most in Dry Cleaning” appeared on a sign in front of Weller’s Dry Cleaning during its construction.



Design of Dry Cleaners after World War II

Advancements in the dry cleaning industry and the spread of drive-in dry cleaners led to changes in the design of stores. Manuals such as *Modern Dry Cleaning Plants* (1945) highlighted the use of Modern architecture to create forward-looking, streamlined, designs with wide canopies to engage customers. The authors of the document emphasized the store itself as the business’ primary advertisement with brilliant colors and floor to ceiling plate glass windows inviting customers to view modern equipment and the cleaning process. The manual stated that “Walls are windows that say to customers ‘Here is a fine place to do business,’”—an essential idea as the industry shifted to on-premises retail cleaners.¹⁰¹ Other key elements included the elimination of unneeded ornamentation, clean building lines, and wide canopies. The architects emphasized further the importance of large, bold signage to attract customers

during the day and illuminated signs for the night. As stated in the manual, “Bright lights sell the suburbs” and signs that cantilevered over the sidewalk increased visibility.¹⁰² Google architecture was a fitting style for the design of these stores.

Illustrations for the design of dry cleaning stores, 1945.

Source: Star Equipment Corporation. Modern Dry Cleaning Plants: Manual of Design, Layout and Operation. Bloomfield, NJ: SEC Cleaning Systems, 1945

Googie Architectural Style

Googie architecture developed years before the field named or classified it as a distinct style. In 1952, Douglas Haskell, architectural editor for *House and Home*, wrote an article titled “This is Googie Architecture.” Haskell derived the name “Googie” from Googie’s Restaurant in Los Angeles, a building he believed exemplified the burgeoning aesthetic for roadside architecture spreading from California across America.¹⁰³ The public had embraced this style for coffee houses, diners, drive-ins, motels, bowling alleys, arcades, and dry cleaners.

In the 1950s, Googie thrived as architects readily experimented with new designs, materials, and forms. The style captured the national obsession with atomic energy, space travel, plastics, automobiles, television, and other forms of burgeoning technology. All these sectors spurred the design of Googie-styled buildings where architects manipulated glass, stainless steel, concrete, porcelain enamel (which use grew rapidly after the war), and other innovative materials to convey progress, optimism, and experimentation.

Googie-styled buildings were designed with bold and dynamic features to create a strong curb appeal to capture the attention of motorists traveling at 35 miles per hour on major roadways. The designs featured dramatic acute angles, boomerang and amoeba shapes, upswept cantilevered roofs, exposed steel, several materials on the same elevation, and prominent use of glazing. Natural materials (such as ashlar cut stone) often contrasted with modern components. Architects accentuated these forms and materials with bright colors and neon lighting. Floor-to-ceiling windows served as an advertisement by allowing pedestrians and passing vehicles to catch a glimpse of the commercial activities within the business. In addition, bold commercial signage, either attached or detached from the building, attracted consumers with its physical presence in the built environment. Parking lots accompanied almost all Googie-styled buildings to facilitate customer access or delivery operations.¹⁰⁴



Norms La Cienaga, Los Angeles, an example of Googie architecture.

Source: Kansas Sebastian, “Norm’s Restaurant – Façade (E),” <http://www.flickr.com>.

Ben and Charles Weller's First Dry Cleaning Stores

Charles Weller inside Weller's Dry Cleaners, date unknown.

Source: Courtesy of Rose Jean Weller/Silver Spring Historical Society.

Benjamin (1912-1993) and Charles Weller (1914-2016) were the sons of Max and Minnie Weller who immigrated from Kounas, Lithuania, to the United States in 1903.¹⁰⁵ Between 1900 and 1914, 1.5 million Eastern European Jews fled en masse due to pogroms (organized massacres) and ill-treatment of the community by Russian czars.

Benjamin Weller married Jeanette R. [family name unknown] and lived in York, Pennsylvania, where he worked in a shoe store in 1939. The following year, he joined the U.S. Hoffman Machinery Corporation, one of the oldest manufacturers of dry cleaning and pressing machines, as an executive assistant. Weller then became one of the founders and field engineer for the Martin Equipment Company of Buffalo, New York.¹⁰⁶ Benjamin and Jeanette Weller then moved to the Washington, DC region and purchased property in the Carroll Knolls subdivision of Montgomery County (north of Forest Glen).¹⁰⁷ In 1950, Weller opened and owned a One Hour Martinizing Dry Cleaning franchise at 948 Wayne Avenue, Silver Spring, in addition to his duties as field engineer for the company.¹⁰⁸ The success of the business led to the opening of additional stores

throughout the South. Weller's obituary stated that he opened at least 28 dry cleaner stores throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas.¹⁰⁹

Charles Weller married Edith Segal and moved to Montgomery County by 1953 where he worked for his brother's burgeoning One Hour Martinizing dry cleaning stores.¹¹⁰

In 1953, Benjamin and Charles Weller entered a lease to open another One Hour Martinizing store in a neighborhood shopping center at 6 North Washington Street in Rockville.¹¹¹ The lease agreement for the Rockville store and county directories recorded Benjamin as the president of the company and Charles as the secretary or manager.¹¹²

In the 1950s, de jure and de facto segregation limited Black residents and visitors from patronizing or working in Silver Spring residential communities and commercial businesses. In 1951, classified advertisements for a clerk position recorded hiring discrimination at the One Hour Martinizing in Silver

Spring. The advertisement stated:

CLERK, white, for modern dry cleaning plant;
 pleasant working conditions. Call SH, 1669.
 948 Wayne ave., Silver Spring, Md.¹¹³

Research did not uncover similar advertisements for Weller's Dry Cleaning at 8237 Fenton Street. Neither the businesses nor the owners were listed in the available case summaries for the Human Relations Commission that oversaw complaints of violations to the county's Public Accommodation Ordinance.¹¹⁴

The Opening of Weller's Dry Cleaning at 8237 Fenton Street

In 1960, Benjamin and Charles Weller purchased the property at 8237 Fenton Street.¹¹⁵ The brothers hired local architect Ted Englehardt to design the dry cleaners which opened in 1961.

Historic photographs taken during the construction of the building documented a sign that reads "Weller's One Hour Martinizing" with the standard One Hour Martinizing franchise slogan "The Most in Dry Cleaning".¹¹⁶

Reference to the franchise, however, is not indicated in later photographs or the current signage, and is no longer present on the building. It is unknown when the Weller brothers severed their relationship with One Hour Martinizing. The success of Weller's Dry Cleaning led the brothers to construct an addition on the south elevation of the main block by 1970.¹¹⁷ Charles Weller operated the dry cleaner business for over 55 years and died at home in Silver Spring, MD, in 2016.

Weller's Dry Cleaning Architect: Ted Englehardt

Julian Theodore Englehardt, better known as Ted Englehardt, was one of the founders and early president of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).¹¹⁸ His work in the region began at the Office of the Supervising Architect in Washington, DC in 1934. Englehardt worked for various offices of the federal government over the next 13 years where he assisted with the design of National Airport, developed plans for defense housing projects, and negotiated contracts with prefabricated housing manufacturers. Unsatisfied with this work, he returned to private practice in 1947. Notable works included various buildings at the University of Maryland, the Asphalt Institute (1956), Denton Hall (1962), and Elkton Hall (1965), and laboratories at the National Institute of Health.¹¹⁹ In Silver Spring, Englehardt was the architect of the Operations Research Institute at 1400



Portrait of Ted Englehardt, architect of Weller's Dry Cleaners, undated. Source: Potomac Valley Chapter of Maryland, "President's Message," Potomac Valley Architect 2, no.5 (January 6, 1958)



View of the Weller's Dry Cleaning under construction, c. 1961. Note the sign that reads "Weller's One Hour Martinizing The Most in Dry Cleaning." Source: Courtesy of Rose Jean Weller/Silver Spring Historical Society.

Spring Street (1963), an International Style office building with turquoise spandrel panels of porcelain enamel. An embedded brick with Englehardt's name remains on the wall of the building.¹²⁰

CONCLUSION

Weller's Dry Cleaning retains integrity to express its period of significance. The building and sign have integrity of location and setting. Both resources remain in their original prominent location at the intersection of Fenton Street and Thayer Avenue in Downtown Silver Spring. The building and sign retain integrity of design, workmanship, and materials as they continue to reflect the Googie style, a subset of the Modern Movement of architecture. The design of the building, however, is diminished by the construction of an addition that impacts the character defining form, massing, and materials. On the façade, the brick-veneered addition interrupts the continuity established by the porcelain

enameled panels. Furthermore, the addition anchors the upswept cantilevered roof canopy to the building instead of the original design where it floated beyond the southern elevation. Nevertheless, these alterations do not negate the building's architectural value as it continues to express the core components of the Googie style. In addition, the Weller's Dry Cleaning site has integrity of association and feeling. The building and sign continue to evoke their period of construction and commercial use.



ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Weller's Dry Cleaning is located at 8237 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, Montgomery County, MD. The Planning Board did not recommend listing the site (property, building, or sign) in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

These design guidelines are intended to assist the current and future property owners, historic preservation staff, and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in the preservation and protection of the historic character and physical integrity of Weller's Dry Cleaning. It is recognized that buildings are not static but continue to evolve over time. These guidelines are not intended to prohibit changes, but rather to preserve the most important physical aspects of the site and ensure that any changes are respectful of and compatible with the historic and existing fabric and character of the building.

The guidelines utilize the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation listed below.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMITS

A Historic Area Works Permit (HAWP) is required to change the exterior features of a historic site or a building located in a historic district. Per Chapter 24A.6 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Historic Area Works Permits (HAWPS) must be issued for any work on public or private properties containing a historic resource before the following actions:

1. Constructing, reconstructing, moving, relocating, demolishing or in any manner modifying, changing, or altering the exterior features of any historic site or any historic resource located within any historic district.
2. Performing any grading, excavating, construction or substantially modifying, changing or altering the environmental setting of an historic site or an historic resource located within an historic district.

An overview of the review and approval process is described in Chapter 24A.6 to 24A.8 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and on the Historic Preservation program's website:

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/historic-area-work-permits/>



Endnotes

- 1 A cultural landscape is a geographic area, including both natural and cultural resources therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person(s), or that exhibits other cultural or aesthetic values. A vernacular cultural landscape: 1) includes the use, construction, or physical layout that reflects endemic traditions, customs, beliefs or values; 2) expresses cultural values, social behavior, and actions over time; and 3) is manifested in physical features and materials and their interrelationships including patterns of spatial organization, land use, circulation, structures, etc. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family, or community, a vernacular landscape reflects the physical and cultural character of those everyday lives. National Park Service, "Understand Cultural Landscape," <http://www.nps.gov>.
- 2 Ninety-one percent of the Union soldiers supported the referendum which passed by 375 votes: 30,174 for and 29,799 against. Charles Bracelen Flood, *Lincoln at the Gates of History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 330.
- 3 Four hundred and twenty-two Montgomery County voters supported the referendum and 1,367 Montgomery County voters rejected the referendum. "The Late Vote on the Constitution," *Baltimore Sun*, November 8, 1864. Newspapers.com.
- 4 Letter from Colonel R.G. Rutherford to Brigadier General Howard, October 27, 1866. Maryland and Delaware, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1872, Family Search.
- 5 State Board of Education, *The Public School Law of Maryland, as Contained in the Maryland Code, Public General Laws, Edition of 1888, and Subsequent Amendments, Passed at the January Session, 1872*, (Baltimore: William J.C. Dulany Company, 1894), 35.
- 6 General Assembly, *Laws of the State of Maryland* (Annapolis: S.S. Mills and L.F. Colton, 1872), 650, <http://www.msa.maryland.gov>.
- 7 Montgomery County received \$532.05 by the end of the fiscal year in September 1872 and \$2,128.19 the following year. State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Shewing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending Sept. 30, 1872* (Annapolis, MD: L.F. Colton & Co., 1873), 29; State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Shewing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending Sept. 30, 1873* (Annapolis, MD: L.F. Colton & Co., 1874), 33.
- 8 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Shewing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending Sept. 30, 1873* (Annapolis, MD: S.S. Mills & L.F. Colton & Co., 1874), 211.
- 9 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education 1873*, 213-214.
- 10 The lack of funding resulted from the county failing to provide any additional money garnered from taxation and relying solely on state funding for Black schools. State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education 1873*, 213, 211-212.
- 11 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Shewing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending Sept. 30, 1879* (Annapolis, MD: W.T. Iglehart & Co., 1880), 210.
- 12 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education 1879*, 209-11.
- 13 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Shewing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending Sept. 30, 1884* (Annapolis, MD: James Young, 1885), 218.
- 14 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Shewing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending Sept. 30, 1879* (Annapolis, MD: W.T. Iglehart & Co., 1880), 210.
- 15 There is a second deed of clarification in 1894. Montgomery County Circuit Court, "James A. and Sarah Boyd to Henry Duffy, Caleb Duffy, and Addison Eugene Duffy," February 12, 1879, Liber EBP 20, Folio 7-8; Montgomery County Circuit Court, "James A. and Sarah Boyd, Duffin, and Duffin to John Brown, William Bolden, Emory Duffin, Edward Perrell, and John Green," September 6, 1894, JA 44, Folio 349-350.
- 16 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Shewing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending Sept. 30, 1879* (Annapolis, MD: W.T. Iglehart & Co., 1880), 210-212.
- 17 1880 United States Federal Census, "Henry and Jane Duffin," Ancestry.com.
- 18 W.M. Bullock Clark, *Maryland Geological Survey, Vol. 6* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins Press, 1906), 522.
- 19 Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Mary H. DeLauder and Edward DeLauder to Board of School Commissioners," August 10, 1892, Liber JA 49, Folio 437.
- 20 Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Mary H. DeLauder and Edward DeLauder to Trustees of St. Mark's M.E. Church," August 10, 1892, Liber JA 34, Folio 34-35.
- 21 Maryland Historical Trust, Inventory Form for State Historic Sites Survey, Boyds Negro School, M: 18/11-1, Attachment Sheet A.
- 22 Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Mary H. DeLauder and Edward DeLauder to Board of School Commissioners," August 10, 1892, Liber JA 49, Folio 437.
- 23 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Showing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending July 31, 1896* (Baltimore, MD: King Brothers, 1897), 178-179.
- 24 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education 1896*, 178-179.
- 25 States with de jure school segregation included: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, and Tennessee. States with optional school segregation (on a local basis) included Kansas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Wyoming.
- 26 H.N. Morse and E. Fred Eastman, *An Educational Survey of a Suburban and Rural County* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 24.
- 27 The first public high school for African American students opened in 1927. H.N. Morse and E. Fred Eastman, *An Educational Survey*, 40.
- 28 H.N. Morse and E. Fred Eastman, *An Educational Survey*, 40-42.
- 29 H.N. Morse and E. Fred Eastman, *An Educational Survey*, 49.
- 30 Thirty-four percent of the white children between the age of five and 20 regularly attended school, while 35% of the African American children between five to 20 years old regularly attended school. H.N. Morse and E. Fred Eastman, *An Educational Survey*, 34 and 42.
- 31 H.N. Morse and E. Fred Eastman, *An Educational Survey*, 41-42.
- 32 H.N. Morse and E. Fred Eastman, *An Educational Survey*, 26.
- 33 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Showing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending July 31, 1937* (Baltimore, MD: 1938), 201.
- 34 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Showing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending July 31, 1921* (Baltimore, MD: 1922), 23.
- 35 State Board of Education, *Report of the Maryland State Board of Education Showing the Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the Year Ending July 31, 1937* (Baltimore, MD: 1938), 200.
- 36 Nina H. Clarke and Lillian B. Brown, *History of the Black Public Schools of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1872-1961* (Washington, DC: Vantage Press, 1978), 48.
- 37 Clarke and Brown, *History of the Black Public Schools*, 65(49)

- 38 "County Auctions Vacant Schools," *Evening Star*, December 10, 1937, NewsBank.
- 39 Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Board of Education to Henry and Mary Thomas," July 20, 1951, Liber 1552, Folio 150-153.
- 40 John K. Pierre, "History of De Jure Segregation in Public Higher Education in America and the State of Maryland Prior to 1954 and the Equalization Strategy," 8 FLA A&M U.L. Rev (2012): 85.
- 41 "Montgomery Negroes Ask Better Schools," *Washington Post*, January 14, 1948, ProQuest.
- 42 John V. Horner, "Charter Committee Nominates Ticket, For County Council," December 3, 1948, NewspaperArchive; "Lane Urged to Name Negro to School Board," *Evening Star*, February 28, 1950, NewspaperArchive; John V. Horner, "Romeo W. Horad, Candidate for Council, Backs Equality," December 27, 1948, NewspaperArchive.
- 43 Kamina A. Pinder, "360 Degrees of Separation: A Historical Perspective of Segregation-Era School Equalization Programs in the Southern United States," *Amsterdam Law Forum* 2, no. 3 (2010), 4 and 12.
- 44 "School Building Program Urged in Montgomery," *Evening Star*, January 16, 1948, Newsbank.
- 45 There is a discrepancy with the archival records. The Rosenwald School database noted Poolesville as a two-room school during this period. "J.B. Zatman, "Montgomery to Consolidate 19 Colored Elementary Schools," *Evening Star*, July 27, 1947, Newsbank.
- 46 "J.B. Zatman, "Montgomery to Consolidate 19 Colored Elementary Schools," *Evening Star*, July 27, 1947, Newsbank.
- 47 The board changed the name of the school upon the request of the children and parents. "Report Assails Montgomery Negro Schools," *Washington Post*, June 8, 1948, ProQuest; Montgomery County Board of Education, Meeting Minutes, June 13, 1950, Maryland State Archives, T1650, Liber 21, Folio 6.
- 48 Maryland Historical Trust, State Historic Sites Inventory Form, Rock Terrace Elementary School, Section 8, Page 4.
- 49 In addition, to the four elementary schools, the County authorized the construction of the George Washington Carver High School in Rockville and the establishment of the Carver Junior College (also housed in the high school). "County Plans Junior College for Negroes," *Washington Post*, August 9, 1950, ProQuest.
- 50 The board agreed to allow McLeod & Ferrara to adapt a proposed set of plans for the African American schools for a set amount; however, later contractual agreements seem to have amended the cost of the architect's fees.
- 51 Montgomery County Board of Education, Meeting Minutes, June 14, 1949, Maryland State Archives, T1650, Liber 20, Folio 12.
- 52 Montgomery County Board of Education, Meeting Minutes, October 10, 1950, Maryland State Archives, T1650, Liber 20, Folio 9.
- 53 Montgomery County Land Records, "Leslie I. Gaines and Bernice Gaines to Board of Education," June 30, 1951, Liber 1546, Folio 506; Montgomery County Land Records, "Leslie I. Gaines and Bernice Gaines to Board of Education," November 3, 1966, Liber 3569, Folio 94.
- 54 The board closed Poolesville Elementary School with the support of the community due to low enrollment (30 children). The board, however, stated that closing the school would have no impact on the location of the new consolidated school planned for this area. Montgomery County Board of Education, Meeting Minutes, September 13, 1949, Maryland State Archives, T1650, Liber 20, Folio 3.
- 55 Edward U. Taylor School, "Dedicatory Souvenir and Program," (1952): 2.
- 56 Edward U. Taylor School, "Dedicatory Souvenir and Program," 2.
- 57 "Montgomery Report Urges \$560,000 for Negro Schools," *Washington Post*, February 10, 1953, ProQuest.
- 58 Conference before the United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Statement of C. Taylor Whittier, Superintendent of Schools, Montgomery County, MD," (March 21-22, 1960); Frederick Luther Dunn, Jr., *Programs and Procedures of Desegregation Developed by the Board of Education, Montgomery County, Maryland* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1959): 31.
- 59 Frederick Luther Dunn, Jr., *Programs and Procedures of Desegregation Developed by the Board of Education, Montgomery County, Maryland* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1959): 47-50.
- 60 The African American population did not grow at the same rate as school enrollment which increased from 2,881 to 3,136, an increase of 9%.
- 61 Conference before the United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Statement of C. Taylor Whittier, Superintendent of Schools, Montgomery County, MD," (March 21-22, 1960): 194-195.
- 62 Conference before the United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Statement of C. Taylor Whittier, Superintendent of Schools, Montgomery County, MD," (March 21-22, 1960): 180.
- 63 Conference before the United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Statement of C. Taylor Whittier, Superintendent of Schools, Montgomery County, MD," (March 21-22, 1960): 195.
- 64 Montgomery County Board of Education, Meeting Minutes, June 13, 1950, Maryland State Archives, T1650, Liber 21, Folio 6.
- 65 Conference before the United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Statement of C. Taylor Whittier, Superintendent of Schools, Montgomery County, MD," (March 21-22, 1960): 180.
- 66 Carol H. Bowie, "Two Nearby Counties Differ on Desegregation," *Washington Post*, March 17, 1961, ProQuest.
- 67 Nina H. Clarke and Lillian B. Brown, *History of the Black Public Schools of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1872-1961* (Washington, DC: Vantage Press, 1978), 121.
- 68 Conference before the United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Statement of C. Taylor Whittier, Superintendent of Schools, Montgomery County, MD," (March 21-22, 1960): 182-183.
- 69 Frederick Luther Dunn, Jr., *Programs and Procedures of Desegregation Developed by the Board of Education, Montgomery County, Maryland* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1959): 204.
- 70 Frederick Luther Dunn, Jr., *Programs and Procedures of Desegregation Developed by the Board of Education, Montgomery County, Maryland* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1959): 204.
- 71 Frederick Luther Dunn, Jr., *Programs and Procedures of Desegregation Developed by the Board of Education, Montgomery County, Maryland* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1959): 204-207.
- 72 "Full Integration by '61 Urged in Montgomery," *Evening Star*, December 30, 1958, Newsbank.
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- 101 SEC Cleaning Systems, *Modern Dry Cleaning Plants: Manual of Design, Layout and Operations* (Bloomfield, NJ: Star Equipment Corporation, 1945), 11.
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- 103 Alan Hess, *Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004), 68-69.
- 104 Hess, *Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture*, 3.
- 105 "Max Weller," *1930 United States Federal Census* (Altoona, PA), Ancestry.
- 106 "New Type Dry Cleaning Plant Will Be Constructed in City," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, August 23, 1954, Newspapers.com.
- 107 Montgomery County Circuit Court, "James B. Evans, Nathan Levin, and Nathaniel J. Taube to Benjamin Weller and Jeanette R. Weller," December 20, 1949, Liber CKW 1334, Folio 350.
- 108 Advertisements in the *Evening Star* noted employment opportunities for an experienced presser to work in a new modern plant at 948 Wayne Avenue in 1950. Classified advertisements noted store-rooms for rent at 948 Wayne Avenue in 1961 and directed interested parties to contact Mr. Weller. This coincided with the opening of the subject dry cleaners. "Presser," *Evening Star*, October 3, 1950, Newsbank.
- 109 Newspaper article stated that he opened 10 stores in Europe as well. For example, Ben Weller owned a store with Isadore Charles Weller (likely a relative who was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania) in Rocky Mount, NC, in 1955. "Benjamin Weller, Dry-Cleaning Innovator," *Washington Post*, October 30, 1993, Proquest; "New Martinizing, Koretizing Plant to Open Here Tuesday," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, February 21, 1953, Newspapers.com.
- 110 The couple had four children: Louis (Ziggy) Chelec, Marc Weller, Robin Melnick, and Lisa Weller. Land Records 1943/7; "Edith Segal Weller," *Washington Post*, March 26, 2020, Proquest; "Charles Weller," *Washington Post*, June 14, 2016, Proquest.
- 111 By 1961, advertisements listed the business as "Glazer's One-Hour Martinizing" which suggests new ownership for the business. Montgomery County Circuit Court, "George P. Kimmel, trustee for N. Richard Kimmel to One Hour Martinizing," March 30, 1953, Liber CKW 1806, Folio 588-598; "Glazer's One Hour Martinizing," *Montgomery County Sentinel*, October 12, 1961, Chronicling America.
- 112 R.L. Polk & Co., Publishers, *Silver Spring, Maryland, City Directory, 1958* (1958), 966, Ancestry.com.
- 113 "Clerk," *Evening Star*, September 5, 1951, Chronicling America.
- 114 In 1966, at a dry cleaners in Rocky Mount, NC owned by Ben Weller and I.C. Weller Isadore Charles Weller (likely a relative who was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania), the Ku Klux Klan picketed the business because the Black employees refused to clean their robes. I.C. Weller responded by subcontracting the work. *Jet* noted, "They [KKK] carried placards claiming unfair treatment ... Weller said he was not able to persuade Negro employees to clean the robes and had been forced to subcontract the work. The KKK thought it a dirty deal and threw up a picket line." "KKK Picket For Clean Robes, Negroes Refuse," *Jet* (August 4, 1966): 9.
- 115 Montgomery County Circuit Court, "Harry Malasky and Dora L. Malasky, et. al to Ben Weller and Charles Weller," May 15, 1960, Liber CKW 2735, Folio 139.
- 116 Photographs courtesy of the Englehardt family.
- 117 Sanborn fire insurance maps and aerial photographs record the construction of the addition between 1964 and 1970. The exact date of construction is unknown.
- 118 Secondary sources incorrectly listed Englehardt as the first president of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the AIA. In the "History: Events Leading to the Chartering of the Potomac Valley Chapter," the author listed Dana B. Johannes as the first president and Roland S. Senseman as the second president. Englehardt first served on the board as Treasurer. The AIA chapter elected Englehardt as its third president in June 1957 and he remained in the position for a one-year term. V.T.H. Bien, "History: Events Leading to the Chartering of the Potomac Valley Chapter," *Potomac Valley Architect* 1, no. 1 (October 1956): 2-3; "Potomac Valley Chapter of Maryland," *Potomac Valley Architect* 2, no. 1 (September 1957): 2.
- 119 John F. Gane, ed., *American Architects Directory, 3rd ed.* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1970), 255.
- 120 Both Weller's Dry Cleaning and the Operations Research Institute featured the trademark brick. "Operations Research Institute (1963), 1400 Spring Street." The Third Place: A Montgomery Planning Department Blog (October 17, 2012).





PLANNING BOARD DRAFT

Edward U. Taylor Elementary School AND Weller's Dry Cleaning

An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

 **Montgomery Planning**

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Written Statement of Deborah Chalfie, Preservation Chair
Art Deco Society of Washington
to the
Montgomery County Council
April 25, 2023
Regarding
Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation
for Weller's Dry Cleaning

Introduction

Council President Glass and Members of the Council, the Art Deco Society of Washington appreciates the opportunity to submit our written testimony on the Planning Board Draft. The Art Deco Society of Washington (ADSW) believes that **the temporary Planning Board's divided vote against designation of Weller's Dry Cleaning represented a grievous error, in that it flouted county law and ignored the overwhelming expert record in support of designation. ADSW urges the Council to correct this error and to amend the Master Plan for Historic Preservation to include Weller's.**

Founded in 1982, the Art Deco Society of Washington is a nonprofit membership organization covering the Washington DC region. Our mission is to foster awareness of, celebrate, and preserve the architectural, decorative, industrial, and cultural arts of the Art Deco era and adjacent modern movements of the 20th Century. ADSW has a solid record of leading or supporting historic preservation efforts within Montgomery County (e.g., Silver Theatre and Silver Spring Shopping Center, Silver Spring CBD Historic District, Polychrome Historic District, and others). More recently, ADSW actively participated in the process around the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan (SSDAC), during which we strongly and repeatedly supported the Plan's proposal to add Weller's to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. We also defended the Plan's approach for keeping Fenton Village small and diverse: the small scale and affordability of the streamlined and midcentury modern buildings in Fenton Village are inextricably tied to the diversity that has flourished there. In addition, ADSW has played a first-hand role in promoting Silver Spring's Art Deco architecture as a commercial attraction, highlighting it in prior walking tours/bus tours, and organizing specific events such as a Polychrome House open house and our recent collaboration with AFI that drew a large crowd to celebrate vintage fashion and see a silent film in our historic Art Deco theater masterpiece.

Background

The Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan singled out Weller’s Dry Cleaning for possible preservation protection. This was not in any way an afterthought; for more than 20 years, various county planning studies and surveys have identified Weller’s as a unique, historic building that should be on the County’s preservation agenda. The uncontested¹ inclusion of Weller’s in the SSDAC *at every stage* of the public process – recommended by Historic Preservation & Planning Staff, proposed by the Planning Board, approved by the County Council (including committee worksessions), and finally adopted by the M-NCPPC – represented a consensus by county officials that Weller’s is strongly deserving of consideration for placement in Master Plan.² Weller’s would have never been spotlighted and approved in the SSDAC unless there was widespread confidence that it met the criteria and there was agreed-upon support for its preservation.

Since the sector plan’s adoption, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) fulfilled its role by considering the thorough documentation presented and voting to recommend that the Weller’s building and sign be placed both on the Locational Atlas and in the Master Plan. It was the temporary, interim Planning Board that conspicuously fell down on the job. Despite repeated admonishments by Chair Zyontz and Senior Counsel Mills during the Planning Board worksession about the need for decisions to be grounded in the legal criteria specified in the historic preservation ordinance, and repeated “clarifications” by Historic Preservation staff about what is and is not within the purview of the Historic Preservation Commission, a bare majority of the temporary Board ignored the law and the merits, and allowed themselves to be swayed by emotion, red herrings, and extra-legal issues.

In his transmittal letter to President Glass, Chair Zyontz stated that while it is the “Board’s role under County code ... to apply historic criteria [for designation,] [t]he Council is *obliged to undertake its own review* of the historic criteria and the extent to which the proposed designation achieves the purpose of historic preservation.”³

ADSW addressed the merits of this proposed designation in our prior testimony.⁴ In this statement, we call your attention to the clearly erroneous decision of the temporary Planning Board, and urge the Council to indeed undertake its own review in accordance with local law. Once the Council understands how flawed the Planning Board Draft is, and considers the unanimous weight of expert evidence and opinion in favor of designation, we hope that the Council will stick with its determination in the SSDAC that Weller’s is deserving of inclusion in the Master Plan.

¹ It should be noted that the current owner of the Weller’s property purchased the property in June 2021. Thus, they already owned the building when the SSDAC Staff Draft, Public Hearing Draft, and Planning Board Draft were publicly released, not to mention the six-month period of public hearings, worksessions, and deliberations of this Council on the SSDAC. The owners did not contest the possible designation of Weller’s during this entire, highly publicized process.

² The sector plan’s support for designating Weller’s is not only reflected in the explicit provision for its evaluation and reference to adaptive reuse, it is also reflected in what was explicitly *not* in the plan. The SSDAC recommended redevelopment of the Safeway site catty-corner from Weller’s, and it specified certain opportunity sites and improvements for Fenton Village. However, neither the Weller’s corner lot nor *any part* of that east side stretch of Fenton Street in Fenton Village was slated for redevelopment. Instead, the plan called for keeping Fenton Village largely intact as a district hospitable to diverse small businesses – something the community overwhelmingly supported.

³ Letter from Jeffrey Zyontz, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board, to Evan Glass, President, Montgomery County Council, Re: Planning Board Draft for the Edward U. Taylor Elementary School and Weller’s Dry Cleaning: An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation (Feb. 24, 2023) (emphasis added).

⁴ ADSW’s testimony to the Planning Board, which addresses the merits regarding Weller’s satisfaction of the criteria and its inclusion in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, is appended to this statement (Appendix).

The Interim Planning Board’s Decision Disregarded the County Historic Preservation Ordinance and the Weight of Expert Evidence in Support of Designation

To be eligible for inclusion in the Master plan, a resource need only be found to meet *one* of the criteria spelled out in §24A-3(b) of the County code. The Designation Report⁵ and Public Hearing Draft⁶ on Weller’s thoroughly and convincingly document the case that the Weller’s building and sign meet at least *two* criteria for architectural and design significance. First, Weller’s embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction (criterion 2A), i.e., the midcentury modern style known as Googie architecture, characterized by cantilevered roofs, sharp angles, abstract shapes, bold colors, and integrated, eye-catching signage. Weller’s and its clock-sign has all of this in spades. Second, Weller’s meets criterion 2E, in that it represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape. Weller’s has been a fixture of downtown Silver Spring since 1961. Love it, hate it, or everything in between, Weller’s and its whimsical clock-sign are a familiar visual feature of Fenton Village.

Nevertheless, rather than applying the legal criteria, several members of the interim Planning Board invented their own. One Planning Board Member implied that because she had never heard of Googie architecture, it must not be significant or historic. Personal lack of knowledge about architecture does not mean that a resource does not meet the legal criteria. In response to the concern raised by preservationists that planners have been slow to recognize and appreciate midcentury modern architecture as “historic” and as a result, have regrettably permitted several midcentury buildings to be demolished, the Board Member argued that if the County was allowing these buildings to be demolished, they must not meet the criteria for historic preservation – otherwise the county would have preserved them! This argument commits too many fallacies of logic to count. The more likely (and persuasive) explanation for why these buildings are being permitted to disappear is because, as with Weller’s, the Planning Board has failed miserably over the years to protect them, based on experience bias (something built while I’ve been alive can’t be historic!) or personal style preferences (I think it’s ugly), and deference toward developers.

Another Board Member stated that she would have voted in favor of Master Plan designation had the building not been painted over, simultaneously ignoring the designation criteria and rewarding an owner hostile to historic protection for having masked, but not irreversibly damaging or erasing, many of the building’s historic elements during the period when the Planning Board was in disarray. Yet another Board Member went off on a tangent about a concern that, if Weller’s was preserved, the owner would be required to undertake costly environmental remediation measures, when in fact, it’s just the reverse: HPO staff reported that the state Department on the Environment had given the owner of Weller’s a green light to operate in the building as is, and it is only if the owner *disrupts* the building’s foundation by demolishing it that environmental issues arise. Besides being wrong-headed, the points made by these Board Members side-stepped the legal criteria for designation.

On the other side of the ledger was the overwhelming weight of unanimous expert opinion that Weller’s meets the legal criteria and is indeed worthy of protection in the Master Plan. Beginning

⁵ Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form, Appendix 9, beg. at 45, in *Appendix: Weller’s Dry Cleaning (#36-86-1)*, 8237 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, Md 20910, *Master Plan for Historic Preservation Designation Form*, December 2022, at 9-11, available at https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/3_Appendix.Weller.DesignationForm.pdf.

⁶ See Mont. Planning Dept., Edward U. Taylor Elementary School and Weller’s Dry Cleaning: *An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Public Hearing Draft*, at 34-35 (Jan. 2023), available at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Taylor-Weller-Public-Hearing-Draft.pdf>.

with the survey undertaken by Potomac-Hudson Engineering in 2002 and continuing with Senior Planner Claire Kelly's of survey of *Montgomery Modern* architecture in 2015, to the study and designation report prepared by EHT Tracerics in 2020 in contemplation of the SSDAC, the HPO staff's reports and memos, and the HPC's decisions in 2022 and 2023 to recommend inclusion of Weller's in the Locational Atlas and the Master Plan, all of these experts have agreed that Weller's amply meets the criteria for historic designation and should be protected. In addition, county historic preservation groups like Montgomery Preservation Inc. and the Silver Spring Historical Society were joined by ADSW, Docomomo-DC, Preservation Maryland, and Alan Hess, an author and national expert in modern art architecture generally and Googie architecture in particular, all registering their support to the Planning Board for amending the Master Plan to list Weller's.

Yes, the new owner of the Weller's property objects to Master Plan protection for Weller's. However, there is nothing in the historic preservation ordinance that requires owner agreement with designation, or prevents designation in the event of disagreement. Many buildings in Silver Spring have been added to the Master Plan over even the vehement objections of the owners (e.g., the Silver Theatre & Silver Spring Shopping Center, the Canada Dry/Silverton Townhomes).

HPO staff and historic preservation groups have repeatedly pointed out that historic preservation is not an either-or choice – designation doesn't mean no change or no development. There are a multitude of local examples where historic buildings and facades have been preserved as part of a larger development.⁷ Creative adaptive reuse would enable the new owner of the Weller's property to *both* preserve Weller's *and* build apartments.

Conclusion

Weller's is an iconic specimen of midcentury Googie architecture, and it is a concrete connection to Silver Spring's and Montgomery's County's history and development. The criteria spelled out in the historic preservation ordinance are there to provide an objective framework for deciding what should be preserved, instead of allowing emotion on either side to dictate what gets preserved. The interim Planning Board's decision on Weller's was clearly erroneous. However, our historic preservation process is broken, and much more than Weller's is at stake. Mid-century modern Googie buildings like Weller's are now nearly extinct in Montgomery County. Over time, the cumulative effect of the Planning Board's consistent failure to preserve these buildings is that we lose an entire era of wonderful and cool of architecture, and an entire era of Silver Spring's history. ADSW urges the Council to correct course here and **list the Weller's Dry Cleaning building and signage in the County's Master Plan for Historic Preservation.**

Thank you for your consideration of our views. For further information, contact Deborah Chalfie, at dchalfie@adsw.org.

⁷ E.g., the Modena Reserve senior living development in Kensington preserved and adaptively reused two small historic buildings on that site; they are now a hair salon for residents and a café open to residents and the public alike. See first photo at <https://modenakensington.com/gallery/>. Roadside LLC, which recently purchased the Tastee Diner property, has already announced plans to adaptively reuse the historic diner building. See <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/03/22/tastee-diner-closed/>. ADSW recently supported the adaptive reuse of a former duckpins bowling alley in DC that will house amenities for a new mixed use development in the Brookland neighborhood. See slide 14 at <https://app.box.com/s/dhn9muwq7e6fqor5v5v40hn1w7yanfma/file/1119009910564>.

APPENDIX



**Statement of Deborah Chalfie, Preservation Chair
Art Deco Society of Washington
Before the
Montgomery County Planning Board
February 23, 2023
Regarding
Listing of Weller’s Dry Cleaning, 8237 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, MD
in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and
the Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites**

Chairman Zyontz and Members of the Planning Board, the Art Deco Society of Washington appreciates the opportunity to testify, and we offer our **whole-hearted support for listing the Weller’s Dry Cleaning building and signage in both the County’s *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*.**

Founded in 1982, the Art Deco Society of Washington (ADSW) is a nonprofit membership organization covering the Washington DC region. Our mission is to foster awareness of, celebrate, and preserve the architectural, decorative, industrial, and cultural arts of the Art Deco era and adjacent modern movements of the 20th Century. Architectural preservation is a core element of our mission. ADSW has a solid record of leading or supporting historic preservation efforts within Montgomery County (e.g., Silver Theatre and Silver Spring Shopping Center, Silver Spring CBD Historic District, Polychrome Historic District, and others). More recently, ADSW actively participated in the process around the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan (SSDAC), during which we strongly and repeatedly supported the Plan’s proposal to add Weller’s to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. We also defended the Plan’s approach of keeping Fenton Village as a diverse, small-scale, commercial district.

SSDAC Sector Plan Supports Designation

The SSDAC sector plan for downtown Silver Spring singled out Weller’s for Master Plan evaluation. It was the Planning Board itself that proposed preservation of Weller’s in the public hearing draft it

forwarded to the County Council in late 2021.¹ The Council agreed, and Weller's is in the final sector plan approved by the Council and the M-NCPPC. The inclusion of Weller's was not in any way an afterthought.

For more than 20 years, Weller's has been publicly identified by planners, preservationists, and community residents as a gem to be preserved.² A 2002 survey of the CBD sector plan for downtown Silver Spring identified the Weller's building and sign – then only about 40 years old – as a candidate for Master Plan evaluation at any time, and possibly eligible for National Register listing when it turned 50.³ In 2011, Clare Lise Kelly, then Senior Architectural Historian for the Montgomery County Planning Department, blogged about Weller's as “Building of the Month,”⁴ and in 2015, she spotlighted Weller's as a “well-preserved example of Googie architecture” in her comprehensive chronicle of mid-century modern architecture in the county, *Montgomery Modern*.⁵

In anticipation of the opportunities offered by the upcoming downtown Silver Spring sector plan update, the HPO staff in the Planning Dept. contracted with EHT Tracerics in 2020, when the Weller family still owned Weller's, to research and prepare a form for the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties,⁶ and secure an inventory number. The proposed designation of Weller's was included in the very first working draft produced by the Planning staff.

The SSDAC's support for designating Weller's is not only reflected in the explicit provision providing for its evaluation and encouraging its adaptive reuse if the occupant and use change,⁷ but it is also reflected in what is explicitly *not* in the plan. The SSDAC recommended redevelopment of the Safeway site catty-corner from Weller's, and it specified certain opportunity sites and improvements for Fenton Village. However, the SSDAC did *not* designate the Weller's corner lot or any part of that east side stretch of Fenton Street in Fenton Village as an opportunity site for redevelopment.⁸ Instead, the SSDAC calls for keeping Fenton Village largely intact as a district hospitable to diverse small businesses – something the community overwhelmingly supported.

In short, the SSDAC represents a consensus by county officials that Weller's is strongly deserving of consideration for placement in Master Plan. Since the Plan's adoption, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has fulfilled its role by voting to recommend that the Weller's building and sign

¹ Mont. Planning, *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, Public Hearing Draft*, at 133 (Fall 2021), available at https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SSDAC-Public-Hearing-Draft_FINAL.pdf.

² See Mont. Planning, “Weller's Dry Cleaning,” Timeline, at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/research-and-designation/wellers-dry-cleaning/>.

³ Potomac Hudson Engineering, *Historic Sites Survey Report: Silver Spring Central Business District*, at 22 (Dec. 2002), available at http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2008/documents/20080612_resource-ss_cbd-survey1_print.pdf.

⁴ Clare L. Kelly, *The Third Place, A Montgomery Planning Department Blog* (Mar. 10, 2011), available at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/blog-design/2011/03/building-of-the-month/>.

⁵ Clare L. Kelly, *Montgomery Modern*, at 94, 96-97 (M-NCPPC, 2015) [hereinafter *Montgomery Modern*].

⁶ Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form, See Appendix 9, beg. at 45, in *Appendix: Weller's Dry Cleaning (#36-86-1), 8237 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, Md 20910, Master Plan for Historic Preservation Designation Form, December 2022*, available at https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/3_Appendix.Weller.DesignationForm.pdf [hereinafter *Weller's Designation Form*].

⁷ Mont. Planning, *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan*, at 186 (Approved and Adopted June 2022), available at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Silver-Spring-DAC-Approved-Adopted-web.pdf> [hereinafter *Final SSDAC*].

⁸ See *id.*, at 44-45.

be placed on both the Locational Atlas and in the Master Plan.⁹ This Planning Board should finish the job.

Weller's Is an Excellent Specimen of Googie Architecture

As thoroughly documented in the staff's Public Hearing Draft for the Board,¹⁰ as well as in EHT Tracerics' MIHP form and Kelly's book on modern architecture in the county, Weller's is an excellent specimen of Googie-style architecture, a futuristic exuberant form of modern architecture that originated in Southern California and is characterized by cantilevered roofs, sharp angles, abstract shapes, bold colors, and integrated, eye-catching signage that produced an effect that was hip, casual, accessible, and fun.

Even GoBrent Realty, the real estate/leasing agent selected by Weller's current owners to market the building to a new tenant last summer, advertised the building as a "distinctive property," highlighting its "mid-century modernist 'Googie' style architecture" as a selling point to attract a new tenant.¹¹ Googie is *still* uniquely cool.

But, Googie buildings like Weller's are increasingly rare in Montgomery County. The Prestige Exceptional Fabricare building on Georgia Ave. in Silver Spring is unprotected and doesn't come close to Weller's dramatic features. The signage at Glenmont Shopping Arcade is under threat from center redevelopment. Other great examples are either long gone (e.g., the Hechinger's store in Rockville) or are being demolished one-by-one, such as the Huggins gas station in Kensington¹² that came down just last week. The cumulative effect is that we lose an entire style of architecture and an entire era of our history. We end up with the "bland" homogeneity of architecture that seems to be overtaking cities across the country,¹³ wiping out diversity in our built environment and erasing our community's unique character that contributes to a city's sense of place.¹⁴

⁹ Mont. Planning, Edward U. Taylor Elementary School and Weller's Dry Cleaning: *An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, staff report completed Feb. 16, 2023, at 1, available at <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/HP-Master-Plan-Amendment-Taylor-School-and-Wellers-2-23-23.pdf>.

¹⁰ See Mont. Planning Dept., Edward U. Taylor Elementary School and Weller's Dry Cleaning: *An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Public Hearing Draft*, at 31-37 (Jan. 2023), available at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Taylor-Weller-Public-Hearing-Draft.pdf> [hereinafter *Public Hearing Draft*].

¹¹ GoBrent listing for 8237 Fenton St., available at <https://gobrentrealty.com/properties/8237-fenton-street/>.

¹² See generally Mont. Cty. Planning Bd., Resolution approving Site Plan No. 820220030 (May 31, 2022), Crossroads of Kensington, available at <https://eplans.montgomeryplanning.org/UFS/32890/99600/30-PBRESandMailingList-820220030.pdf/30-PBRESandMailingList-820220030.pdf>.

¹³ Anna Kodé, "America, The Bland," *N.Y. Times* (Jan. 20, 2023), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/20/realestate/housing-developments-city-architecture.html>. Unfortunately, the apartment buildings that have recently gone up in Silver Spring look very much like the buildings pictured in this article.

¹⁴ The SSDAC made a similar point: "The preservation of select historic resources is critical if the downtown is to develop in a way that reflects the authenticity and unique qualities of Silver Spring. The community's sense of place relies upon several historic buildings Adaptive reuse of historic buildings provides texture and depth to the architectural character of the Plan area. The resources are thoughtfully designed, often focus on the pedestrian-level, and stand out in the urban landscape. They are manifestations of the community's collective identity. *Final SSDAC Plan*, *supra* n. 7, at 180.

Weller's Meets the Criteria for Designation and Master Plan Framework

The earlier Designation Report¹⁵ and recent Public Hearing Draft¹⁶ prepared by the Planning staff convincingly make the case that the Weller's building and sign meet at least two criteria for architectural and design significance: Weller's embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction (2A), and it represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape (2E). The Art Deco Society strongly agrees. Weller's and its signage embody many of the character-defining features of the distinctive style known as Googie architecture, and should be considered together as one historic resource. Moreover, due to its singular style and long-time presence in its current location, Weller's is an important, place-making resource for Fenton Village, the downtown area, and the entire community.

It has not escaped anyone's notice that, soon after the last scheduled Planning Board hearing on Weller's was postponed, the owners allowed the new tenant to encase the building in a coat of beige paint, which had the effect of masking, but certainly not erasing, the building's brick and colorful porcelain enamel panels. All of the character-defining structural features of the building are still very much intact. It's just paint, and paint is superficial and can be removed¹⁷ – including from the porcelain enamel panels,¹⁸ or they replaced with like-kind materials since porcelain enamel panels are still made and used in construction.¹⁹ Glass can be replaced. Similarly, the content of the signage was altered when the owners/tenant removed and disposed of the Weller's sign panels from their metal frames, but the metal frames and whimsical clock are still there. The case for designation and protection of Weller's remains unaffected by the unfortunate alterations. Should the building be designated, the owners could take advantage of tax credits to help finance the paint removal and restoration.

In addition to meeting the designation criteria, the Master Plan indicates that priority should be given to buildings offering public benefits such as enhancing neighborhoods and communities.²⁰ Preservation of Weller's is not only important in and of itself, it is important to the preservation and enhancement of Fenton Village. By being a small-scale affordable commercial building, Weller's bolsters the small-business district that is Fenton Village. In fact, Weller's is not just one more small building; Clare Kelly stated that “the space-age design of the 1960 [sic] Weller's Dry Cleaning building serves as a *gateway* to a Fenton Street shopping district of [additional colorful midcentury buildings].”²¹

Preservation groups, including ADSW, were among the strongest defenders of preserving Fenton Village during the sector plan process; we advocated to keep Fenton Village accessible to small

¹⁵ *Weller's Designation Form*, *supra* n. 6, at 9-11.

¹⁶ *Public Hearing Draft*, *supra* n. 10, at 34-35.

¹⁷ See generally, Anne E. Grimmer, *Keeping It Clean: Removing Exterior Dirt, Paint, Stains and Graffiti from Historic Masonry Buildings* 18-19 (Nat'l Park Service, 1988), at <http://npshistory.com/publications/preservation/keeping-it-clean.pdf>.

¹⁸ Thomas Jester, ed., *Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, 223, 229 (Getty Conserv. Inst., 2014) (“Paints can be removed [from porcelain panels] with proprietary strippers, but caustic ones, which can etch the porcelain enamel, should be avoided”), at <https://www.getty.edu/publications/resources/virtuallibrary/9781606063255.pdf>.

¹⁹ See generally, Porcelain Enamel Institute, at https://www.porcelainenamel.com/about_pei/architectural/.

²⁰ *Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County*, at 21 (M-NCPPC, Sept. 1979), available at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Master-Plan-for-Historic-Preservation.pdf>.

²¹ *Montgomery Modern*, *supra* n. 5, at 94 (emphasis added).

businesses and immigrant entrepreneurs. ADSW argued that “[t]he community appreciates the area’s history of: providing a toehold for small entrepreneurs, often recent immigrants; nurturing small businesses that serve diverse communities; and maintaining the small-scale of its older buildings and nearby street parking.”²² The small scale and affordability of the streamlined and midcentury modern buildings in Fenton Village are inextricably tied to the diversity that has flourished there. Fenton Village’s diversity is something to celebrate and preserve. That won’t continue if we fail to protect the small midcentury buildings there.

Historic Preservation Can Be Compatible with Redevelopment

ADSW is aware that the owners of Weller’s believe that historic preservation is incompatible with their aspirations for the site. Yet, done right, these interests are not mutually exclusive. Sometimes buildings are preserved and restored in a way that they continue with the same function, such as the AFI Silver Theatre & Silver Spring Shopping Center. More often, buildings are preserved and then adaptively reused for a new purpose. In both cases, preservation is often not just compatible with development, it actually elevates the appeal and function of the entire development.

For instance, take the new Modena Reserve senior living development in Kensington that was built on what used to be the Mizell Lumber & Hardware property. There were two small historic buildings on that site, the Mizell office and a former gas station. The developer preserved and adaptively reused them. Now, they are amenities for the new apartment building: one is a hair salon for residents, and within the next month, the other will be a café open to residents and the public alike.²³ ADSW contacted the developer who managed the Modena Reserve development. He indicated²⁴ that they never considered demolishing the two small historic buildings on the property; from the start, they planned to preserve, refurbish, reuse, and connect them to the apartment building. Perhaps the owners of Weller’s could do something similar with an adjacent apartment building. Or Weller’s could be a lobby. There are many design options that are possible.

In any case, the rights incident to property ownership are not absolute, but are subject to reasonable regulation for the benefit of the community. There are many types of regulation deemed in the public interest that can limit a property owner’s “rights” to do whatever they want with their business or property – laws and regulations on agriculture and the environment, on civil rights and public accommodations, on zoning, and on historic preservation. As a result, there are ample precedents for requiring preservation of a resource over an owner’s objection. And in many instances, the owner comes around after-the-fact and sees the value – including the financial value – in preserving a building as part of a new development. For example:

- Canada Dry/Silverton - The Silverton Townhomes on East-West Highway in Silver Spring incorporated the old Canada Dry bottling plant façade and lobby interior into the new development. Initially, the owner strongly opposed preserving any part of this Streamline Moderne masterpiece. But once the county decided to preserve a good portion of the street-

²² Statement of Art Deco Society of Washington to Mont. Cty. Planning Board Re: Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Draft Plan, at 4 (Dec. 1, 2021), available at <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Item-8-Correspondence-Public-Hearing-for-Silver-Spring-Downtown-and-Adjacent-Communities-Plan-compressed-1.pdf> (p. 80 of 102).

²³ See first photo at Modena Reserve Kensington website, Gallery, <https://modenakensington.com/gallery/>.

²⁴ Telephone conversation of Deborah Chalfie, ADSW Preservation Chair, with Juan Cameron, Partner and Senior Managing Director, Development & Acquisitions, McCaffery (Feb. 17, 2023).

facing façade, the developer’s designers were delighted and enthusiastic, saving the interior lobby with its terrazzo and spiral staircase as well. The owner also changed its tune and now the striking Canada Dry façade is often featured in real estate ads for those condos.²⁵

- **Silver Theatre & Silver Spring Shopping Center** – Whether to preserve these two John Ebersson masterpieces unfortunately became a battle royale between the developer vs. the community and preservationists. The owners of the theatre-shopping center started vandalizing the buildings²⁶ to avert preservation, but both properties ended up being preserved on both the Atlas and in the Master Plan, and meticulously restored. They are now the crown jewels of downtown Silver Spring.

Conclusion

“Architecture tells the story of a place, and the erasure of [modern architecture] ... is the removal of an important chapter of social, political, economic, and cultural history.”²⁷

Weller’s is a beloved and long-time fixture in downtown Silver Spring, reflecting the suburban culture and space age themes of its time. It is an anchor in Fenton Village, and an architectural highlight of Montgomery County. The question before the Board is not necessarily an either-or issue. Preserving Weller’s can coexist with the owners’ desire to build an apartment building next door. The Art Deco Society urges the Planning Board to forward a recommended amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* for Weller’s, AND to decide now to add it to the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*, so that the building is protected during the remainder of the County’s deliberations.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. We would welcome any questions you may have. For further information, contact Deborah Chalfie, at dchalfie@adsw.org.

²⁵ See e.g., McEneaney Assoc. listing for 1201 East West Highway, #205, at <https://www.mceneaney.com/real-estate/1201-east-west-highway-205-silver-spring-md-20910/mdmc2050436/123692148>.

²⁶ See Benjamin Forgey, “The Vanishing Silver,” *Washington Post* (Aug. 30, 1984), available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1984/08/30/the-vanishing-silver/bcc8541d-be43-4311-a995-e78d6fde3552/>.

²⁷ Paraphrase of The Cultural Tutor, Tweet on Brutalism (Jan. 17, 2023) available at https://twitter.com/culturaltutor/status/1615387835967868928?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email.

Montgomery Preservation Inc.

Promoting the Preservation, Protection and Enjoyment of Montgomery County's Rich Architectural Heritage and Historic Landscapes

**Edward U. Taylor Elementary School and Weller's Dry Cleaning
Written Testimony to County Council – re: public hearing on April 25, 2023
Eileen McGuckian, President, Montgomery Preservation, Inc. (MPI)**

Edward U. Taylor School and Weller's Dry Cleaning stand strongly on their own, together portraying two different and important aspects of Montgomery County in postwar America. Both historic resources meet and excel County standards for historic designation, representing the best in their respective domains. Both are mid-20th century historic resources that are not adequately represented on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Both are intact -- immediately recognizable historic buildings – with street appeal that declares their places in local history and beyond. Where they diverge is that one has a reasonably secure future, and the other desperately needs protection from being obliterated.

EDWARD U. TAYLOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, opened in 1952

Edward Ulysses Taylor grew up in Emory Grove when Black students had to go elsewhere beyond 8th grade. After graduating from Howard University, he returned home to educate the next generations. His career paralleled that of better-known Edwin W. Broome, who became Superintendent of Schools in 1917 and convinced the Montgomery County School Board to bring on a Black supervisor for the Negro schools. Mr. Taylor was hired permanently in 1924.

For the next 27 years, Taylor and Broome were in lock step. Broome's 36 years as superintendent are known for expansion to kindergarten and 12 grades, and for accommodating our exploding population. Taylor fought for higher teacher salaries, summer training, and maternity leave. He helped to open the first high school in Rockville in 1927 and became its principal. There he taught social studies in the morning and visited elementary schools in the afternoon. In the 1930s and '40s, he led the Colored schools through closings of poorly maintained small schools in favor of larger and better facilities that still fell below the standard for White students.

After Mr. Taylor's death in 1951, it was fitting for one of the four new brick consolidated Colored schools to be named for him. Edward U. Taylor Elementary was the first to recognize a Black hero. It was state of the art, a move toward equal facilities only a few years before *Brown vs Board*. A decade later, Taylor was the only formerly Black school to become a mainstream integrated elementary. Taylor's juxtaposition near the one-room Boyds Negro School that opened the year of *Plessy vs Ferguson* is striking.

Montgomery Preservation concurs with the Planning Board and HPC that this site meets three criteria to earn designation on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

WELLER'S DRY CLEANING STORE, opened in 1961

Weller's Dry Cleaning is the best surviving example of "Googie-style" Mid-century Modern architecture in our county. Its whimsical, futuristic design typifies the kind of automobile-centric culture that was central to the development of suburban Silver Spring, and its physical presence is critical to understanding Silver Spring and suburban Montgomery County today. MPI concurs with Planning Staff and the HPC that Weller's is eligible for designation on the Master Plan, via criteria 2a and 2e.

Weller's has been identified by multiple experts and advocates, including architectural historians and planners, for two decades. It has been highlighted in multiple surveys, in adopted Master plans, and in a ground-breaking publication. In every instance, as County plans evolved, calls were made to preserve this unique property. Supporters of Weller's historic designation include the Art Deco Society of Washington DC, Preservation Maryland, Docomomo DC (public awareness of architecture and sites in the DMV), Silver Spring Historical Society, Robert Bachman (expert, speaker on Montgomery County in 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s), Alan Hess (architect, historian, author, critic for *San Jose Mercury News*), and Teresa Lachin (author of *Rockville's Recent Past*). All agree that it is high time to act decisively because: *When a building is gone, it is gone.*

Locational Atlas and Master Plan for Historic Preservation

In the late 1970s I was part of the Sugarloaf Regional Trails team that assisted the Planning Board to create background documents and draft the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. All of us believed, naively as it turned out, that it would be a smooth process to evaluate all sites on the 1976 *Locational Atlas* to determine which should be designated. In 1978 the County Council enacted an interim ordinance that required review of Atlas sites before they could be demolished. This was immediately effective in Takoma Park, where Montgomery College was razing blocks of Victorian houses.

When the Master Plan and Preservation ordinance were adopted in 1979, the Atlas was kept as a stop-gap to review proposed demolitions and substantial alterations, vital to protect sites that had not yet completed the lengthy process of being approved by the Planning Board and adopted by the Council. With 143 of the original sites and districts on the Atlas remaining to be evaluated, this document is still important. However, as a 1976 inventory, the Atlas does not cover Mid-century Modern sites. This, and that County DPS does not always enforce disclosure of Atlas status, results in lack of review for major exterior alterations to Atlas sites.

Mid-20th Century Historic Sites

In these 45 years, the Planning Board and Council have pretty much ignored a major era in County history. The post-WW2 period brought huge change in our demographics, in commercial and residential development, and architectural styles. Clare Lise Kelly's *Montgomery Modern* publication, sponsored by M-NCPPC in 2015, helps to fill this gap; Weller's appears in color on page 96.

Lack of concern about mid-20th-century history being destroyed is short-sighted and distressing. We are losing gems and icons of period architecture, particularly in our down-county suburban areas. *When they are gone, they are gone.*

Historic Preservation and Property Owner Consent

MPI is aware of Weller's owner to designation of her property. Owners are key to protection and restoration of historic properties. Owning one and maintaining it for future generations (whether related to you or not) is the most successful way to honor and use historic sites.

That said, very few preservation laws in the United States require consent of the property owner for designation. *Neither Maryland nor Montgomery County require it.* In fact, if all property owners were cooperative regarding zoning, planning, maintenance, and preserving their historic buildings, fewer laws would be needed.

This is solid legal ground. The U.S. Supreme Court has weighed in more than once on the rights of states and cities to enact land use controls to preserve historic sites. The Court ruled that “preservation ... is a permissible goal of government action” and that “communities have the right to be beautiful” as well as healthy, clean, and protected. Specifically, the Court stated that land use controls may be used “to enhance the quality of life by preserving desirable aesthetic features of the city.... and that preservation of landmarks benefits the citizenry economically as well as by improving the overall quality of life.”

Montgomery County has a solid record of informing owners and taking their preferences seriously. That is continuing here. Even so, there have been times when rights of the public to be beautiful as well as clean have trumped owner reluctance. And in every one of those cases, this has proven to be the right action. Most of those objections faded as situations and ownership changed, incentives were taken advantage of, creative new uses were found, and *communities recognized the public benefit* of preserving historic sites.

Not all Master Plan nominations have been supported by their owners

To the best of recollections, no Montgomery County Historic District -- from our earliest Capitol View Park Historic District to the recent designation of Greenwich Forest – has come in with 100% support of property owners.... with the one exception of Potomac Overlook.

Some examples of Montgomery County sites designated over the objection of their owners:

Silver Spring Theatre & Shopping Center– citizen outcry, rescued, now thriving arts venue and businesses
Carver High School & Jr College – student and citizen advocacy, repurposed as BOE administration building
Uncle Tom’s Cabin, now known as Josiah Henson house – owners respected history but concerned about privacy; one of first 61 designated sites, sold to M-NCPPC 2006, on the National Register 2011

Falkland Apartments, Silver Spring – remains affordable, charming housing

Hyatt-Jones house on Georgia Avenue near Olney – flourishing antique business

Canada Dry building, Silver Spring – owners appreciate unique residential marketing

Designation and preservation of Weller’s will not restrict this owner from developing her property. No one has been lecturing to or patronizing this owner. A savvy merchant would use Google charm to attract customers, which of course is what the Weller brothers did. In our time of needing to ask “Which city am I in?” unique architecture stands out. With its great curb appeal this gem could be used as the entrance to or part of a larger future residential or commercial project. Whoever the owner and whatsoever its use, this landmark deserves to gracefully age in place.

Preservationists have no illusions about our place in this fast-moving world. MPI has recognized more than 300 owners with awards over decades, but in reality we often lose battles. However, it is rare for a site to earn as much passion as has this little building. There are solid reasons for professional staff and a dedicated commission to be unanimous about Weller’s, and for so many different groups and individuals to agree on its significance. *Remember: when it’s gone, It’s gone.*

In closing, MPI urges the Council to designate Weller's Dry Cleaning on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. This would not only provide full protection to this unique building but also offer incentives to the owners to maintain, restore, and re-use it and return it as the gateway to the Fenton Village district. Please save this prominent emblem of small business strategies and commercial Mid-century Modern architecture.

MPI also requests that you vote to designate Edward U Taylor School on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Education and the African American experience are major components of our County's history, into today.

We hope you will agree that these actions are unquestionably favorable to the public interest.

Sincerely,

■


Eileen McGuckian, President
Montgomery Preservation, Inc.
www.montgomerypreservation.org
personal email: phileen3@verizon.net

Weller's & Taylor Elementary School's Master Plan Designation

Testimony by George French & Marcie Stickle, County Council Hearing April 25, 2023

We support placing the Googie Style Weller's Dry Cleaning structure with its insignia, floating, free-standing Sign, and the Taylor ES on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Both meet the criteria for inclusion as put forward by the HPC staff and agreed to by all of the experts in this field.

The experts supporting Weller's trace back to 2002 when Architectural Historian firm Potomac Engineering singled out Weller's for special consideration when it turned 50. 2020, another AH firm Traceries agreed to its significance when it determined that Weller's is National Register eligible. Our MC HPC staff, made up of career expert historic preservationists, concurs, and determines Weller's to be worthy of Master Plan designation.

Another former County career preservationist Clare Lise Kelly touts Weller's in her book, "Montgomery Modern," and vividly also on MNCPPC online preservation sites.

Our esteemed HPC voted overwhelmingly with only one dissension to list on the Master Plan. Alan Hess, an author and expert in Googie style architecture testified on Weller's behalf. Planning Board Chair Zyontz and one other commissioner who understands the Historic Preservation Ordinance voted listing on the Master Plan. The other 3 should have reconsidered their vote and followed suit on the county ordinance based on Weller's meeting two criteria. This Council should do the same.

Many other organizations including Preservation Maryland, Art Deco Society, docomomodc, Montgomery Preservation Inc., Silver Spring Historical Society, consisting of HP experts, and extremely knowledgeable individuals representing hundreds of years of cumulative scholarship vocation and avocation support preservation of Weller's.

For over 30 years we have been intrigued by and enjoyed the strange and whimsical "road-side architecture" of this wondrous structure termed Googie style architecture. There has been much interest over many years from the former Silver Spring Park, now a part of East S.S. to protect and see the building retained for a multi-cultural small independent business district built on a human scale, fast disappearing from the S.S. landscape.

Googie architecture is a rarity in MC and we are so fortunate to have such a stunning example as Weller's to celebrate and enjoy right here in Silver Spring.

We implore the County Council approve an Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation to designate Weller's and Taylor ES as Master Plan Historic Sites.

Thank you, George French & Marcie Stickle, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

April 19, 2023

Karen Burditt

Montgomery County Council
Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation for Weller's Dry-Cleaning.

Dear Council President Glass and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

I am writing as a 24 year resident of East Silver Spring and as a Weller's Dry Cleaning customer until it closed in 2022. I knew Charlie Weller, his son Brian, and the other Weller's workers like Isaac and Mr. Mohammed. I saw them every week and listened to their stories about their families and they listened to mine. I am also writing as a long time supporter of Fenton Village, a founding member of the Fenton Village Inc. Board, and the creator of the annual "Best Of Fenton Village" contest that ran 2012-2017. Finally, I am writing as an Architect and Preservationist, who is actively involved in Montgomery County preservation issues.

I am writing in support of the designation of Weller's Dry Cleaning to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Fenton Village has always been a unique and 'funky' place. A small business district that is very different from the pre-planned town centers and cookie cutter mixed use developments. Fenton Village is 'real', a mix of old and new, a small business incubator, and one of the most diverse small business districts in Montgomery County. Fenton Village is so unique that the County spent considerable time and effort towards marketing it as a nighttime destination area. Fenton village has thrived while newer parts of the area have kept reinventing their look in an attempt to attract clientele. Part of Fenton Village's charm has been the varied building types that encompass more than 120 years of Silver Spring's history. Downtown Silver Spring has one of the best surviving collections of Mid Century commercial architecture left in the county. A visible link to a past when Silver Spring was the commercial center of the county. Weller's Dry Cleaner is the most identifiable building left in Fenton Village and downtown Silver Spring. There is not another building like Wellers left in the region.

Given the uniqueness of Fenton Village now, and the history of Downtown Silver Spring, the entire Fenton Village and Downtown Silver Spring areas should be a prized historic district. Sadly, the reality is far different. There has not been a building designated in Fenton Village and Downtown Silver Spring in over twenty years. Since those previous County Councils had the vision to designate a handful of buildings in the 1990's and early 2000's, no subsequent County Council has voted to designate a single building in the area. Reactive short term gain has been the focus of the Council, not a far sighted vision of how Silver Spring could be on the forefront of preservation of Mid Century Modern Architecture in the region.

My interest in preservation goes back to my childhood in Rockville. My family moved there just as the new Rockville Mall was finished in the early 1970's. The charming historic downtown of Rockville had been bulldozed and replaced with the concrete bunker of Rockville Mall, a forbidding dark place that was bankrupt within a decade. Now Rockville has a faux downtown, instead of a revitalized historic downtown. Downtown Silver Spring has more authentic character than downtown Rockville, or the Pike & Rose, or the Rio. And yet all the new developments depend on tearing down that authentic character to build generic new buildings that all look alike. Why would anyone come to Silver Spring when it looks just like The Pike & Rose, the Rio, or any of the new developments in the DMV?

It takes courage to advocate for preservation, the developers don't like you, the property owners don't like you, politicians avoid you. Yet, everyone loves a selfie in front of a unique preserved building. Residents and visitors alike seek out those unique places that are different from the one size fits all cookie cutter developments. The American Film Institute made the restored Art Deco Silver Theater its home because it understood the value of preservation. It takes courage to vote for designation, because as Council Members, you must rely on the expertise of the County's own Historic Preservation staff, the Planning staff, and those experts in the field who come to testify. It takes courage to explain to a Property Owner or a Developer that they need to think outside of their proposed box, to include a designated building in their project. To make Adaptive Reuse their goal.

I ask you to avoid the bunkerlike mentality that built Rockville Mall. Follow the lead of other urban areas in the Mid-Atlantic and adaptively reuse the unique historic buildings in Fenton Village and Downtown Silver Spring. If Baltimore, Richmond, DC, and Frederick, can successfully do it, then Montgomery County should be able to save their significant buildings while adding new residential space. It will take courage on your part, like the courage of those earlier Council members who saved the Silver Theater, the Hecht Building, The Dry Cleaning Institute, and the Canada Dry Building, all successful examples of adaptive reuse.

As an HPC Commissioner, I was at both HPC meetings related to Wellers, and there was no bias against the current owners of Wellers. There was a great deal of respect for these small business Owners who have made a success like so many others I have known in Fenton Village, like Charlie Weller. We tried to explain that their project could be successful with a designated Weller's and its tax credits.

I ask that you set aside the recommendation of a Planning Board vote and its procedural irregularities, and the troubling conduct of those Planning Board Commissioners. That Planning Board Meeting reflected poorly on the Planning Board and their understanding of the designation criteria and procedures.

I ask for your courage to vote to designate Weller's, so in the future, your term on the Council will be remembered as one that saved the history of Montgomery County for future generations.

Respectfully,

Karen Burditt, AIA, APT, NCARB
HPC, MPI

Exuberant Gogie Weller's & Its Signage: For ALL of Us! Deserving of Master Plan Designation
Enlivening Adaptive Reuse! Designed by Noted Architect & S.S. Resident Ted Englehardt!
Testimony by Marcie Stickle, Montgomery County Council, 4/25/23

Commencing early 2000's, my Partner and I, SSHS Board Members, along with Community Members, worked with and on behalf of our Multi-Cultural Moms & Pops/Small Independent Businesses/SIBs/Siblings/ to make certain they Thrived not just Survived in the Revitalization of Downtown S.S. Linking arms in our Initiative, we all worked together through the very effective, active S.S. Regional Services Center Neighborhood Committee!

Councilwoman Valerie Ervin was a champion of this cause working alongside community members, including preservationists/adaptive re-users such as ourselves! This Initiative led to recommending "Targeted Investment Zones" within Heritage Areas; providing Mo Co Impact Assistance Funding; creating "Buy Local Silver Spring"; Latino Economic Development Center; founding of Fenton Village & Fenton Village Taste the World Days! See 2 lovely "Buy Local" Brochures! Addis Ababa Restaurant & Weller's Dry Cleaners are posted within, along with other multi-cultural SIBs!

George French & I/SSHS provided slide shows to the community, one was at the Nora School, very well attended. "Multi-Cultural SIBs to Thrive in their Original Human Scale Buildings Built to Last along S.S.'s Original Main Streets & Adjacent Side Streets," as personified in our Fenton Village! Heritage Tourism is Economic Development is the clarion call.

Montgomery Preservation Inc. & SSHS were Champions, linking with others!
S.S.'s Original Main Streets are Georgia Ave. & Colesville Road & their adjacent side streets.

Versatile S.S. Architect Englehardt & Potomac Valley Architects were located at 912 Thayer Ave in the immediate neighborhood!

We enjoyed dining so much at Addis Ababa over the years, promoting to others.
We enjoyed also vibrant Weller's Presence on the Landscape, & for its services.
"Eye Appeal Is Buy Appeal"! Glass Window Walls serve as beguiling Display Windows!

We/SSHS were invited to participate 2006 in 2 Urban Land Institute Meetings on "Developing a Retail Strategy for Silver Spring." Working together with Jerry A. McCoy, SSHS President, we submitted to a Survey & Report with Photos to ULI. **Eloquent support letters from The National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Maryland, and Montgomery Preservation Inc. were included.**

"Targeted Investment Zones," within Mo Co "Certified Heritage Areas" in Maryland was also supported by a number of State and County officials at that time.

Quoting from ULI Report, ULI Washington, A Technical Assistance Panel Report Developing a Retail Strategy for Silver Spring
Sponsored by: Silver Spring Regional Service Center, Montgomery County, Maryland
September 26-27, 2006; See # 1 Recommendation below:

"The panel hopes that the recommendations provided in this report will stimulate ongoing action that will result in the revitalization of Silver Spring. In developing its recommendations, the panel created the following guiding principles that it hopes will be espoused by all stakeholders as they move forward:

"Maintain Silver Spring's unique and historic character";

Relating to impacts of Purple Line Construction on Bonifant St.'s multi-cultural small independent business; in more recent years, I participated in meetings held on Bonifant St. at the businesses themselves. Concerned State & County Officials always actively participated!

Please take the next step, and as the HPC and their superb Expert Staff has researched, and advises, I enthusiastically request the County Council approve an Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation designating Weller's and its Signage as a Master Plan Historic Site for ALL of us!

Thank you! Marcie Stickle, 510 Albany Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912, 301-587-5955
marcipro@aol.com

TO: County Council President Glass and Council Members

FROM: Mary Reardon, representing Silver Spring Historical Society

RE: Testimony re Master Plan Addition of Weller's Dry Cleaning

Before County Council

Date: April 25, 2023

Good afternoon.

My name is Mary Reardon, and I'm representing the Silver Spring Historical Society. Our President is submitting a *written* statement.

Silver Spring Historical Society enthusiastically joins with other preservation groups and experts – and the Historic Preservation Commission - in affirming that the Weller's Dry Cleaning building and sign are eligible for listing on the County Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

It's important to remind Council members what propelled this process. County planners, in the recently approved Silver Spring sector plan, *singled out* Weller's to be studied for potential listing on the Master Plan. The Historic Preservation staff promptly set this recommendation in motion.

My point is that the Historic Preservation Commission was not prompted by an immigrant family's purchase of this property, as some of our opponents have claimed – a preposterous accusation against Commissioners and staff and an example of the hostility directed at preservationists.

I have often been awed by the Weller's building. I was fascinated with its mixture of construction materials, colorful striped panels, and the bright geometric shapes of the sign – even before I learned about an architectural style called Googie.

The label "Googie" itself is another tool of hostility by opponents of designation. They've implied that unfamiliarity with the term means the style is not a serious architectural category. As if unfamiliarity with the term "Prairie Style" would delegitimize the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Preservationists have long valued the small independent businesses in Silver Spring's Fenton Village, particularly their ethnic diversity. During the sector plan work sessions, preservationists urged that Fenton Village's small businesses and moderate-scale, affordable buildings like Weller's be preserved.

Weller's long history of service in Fenton Village was begun, interestingly, by sons of Lithuanian immigrants. Weller's familiar, unique design, and its embodiment of the Googie

style, meet two legal criteria for historic designation - affirmed by the HPC (yet barely touched on by the three Planning Board opponents of designation).

We are aware that the Weller's owner considers designation incompatible with the family's plans for this site and her other properties, and that she is frustrated in encountering County regulations on preservation and also on environmental remediation requirements. But government regulations are part of the cost of doing business. And with its colorful elements restored, the unique features of Weller's could attract customers to businesses located there or provide a stunning entrance to a future housing or commercial structure. Moreover, demolition would involve environmental remediation costs at this former dry cleaning site.

The new occupant of the building has retained the structural elements of the Weller's building sign. The inverted triangle element contains text in Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia. So this new business contributes to the medley of cultures that is a pride of Fenton Village.

To conclude, Silver Spring Historical Society strongly urges the Council to list the Weller's building and sign on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Mary Reardon, 2236 Washington Ave., 101, Silver Spring 20910 240-535-5200

May 7, 2023

The Boyds Historical Society asks the Montgomery County Council to designate the Edward U. Taylor School on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. In addition, we specifically ask the Council to designate the entire area (building and property) as the environmental setting, as recommended by Historic Preservation Commission staff. We oppose the Planning Board's suggestion to consider designating a smaller section of the parcel.

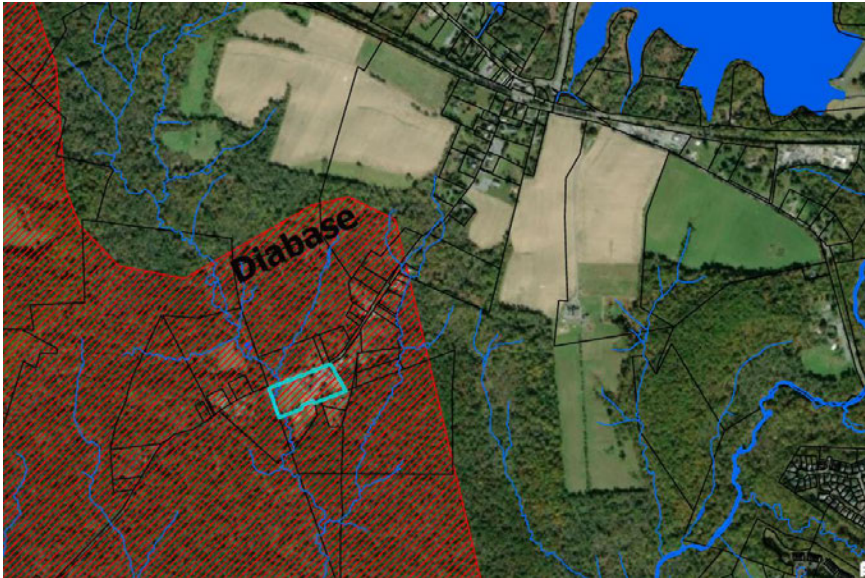
First, the entire area was the Taylor School – not just the building, or the building and part of the property, but the whole property. The entire area was the environmental setting, and thus the entire area should be designated as the environmental setting. In the memory of students who attended the Taylor School, both during segregation and after integration, the play area and playing fields were just as much a part of the school as the school building.

Second, the Planning Board's recommendation was based on a desire not to preclude further development on the parcel. However, further development on the parcel is extremely unlikely, regardless of historic designation, given that

- The area is on well and septic and designated to remain on well and septic.
- The western part of the parcel is in the 500-year flood plain (see olive green, on the left).



- The whole parcel is on diabase bedrock, which means the parcel will not pass a percolation test. (The Taylor School has a septic tank which must be pumped out multiple times a year, even with just the current limited usage of the building.)



- The parcel is also on an Exceptional Rustic Road (White Ground Road).

In addition, historic designation does not preclude further development; there are many examples in Montgomery County of further development within the designated environmental setting of a designated historic site.

For these reasons, we ask the Montgomery County Council to follow the original Historic Preservation Commission staff recommendation and designate the entire parcel as the environmental setting.

Thank you,

Miriam Schoenbaum
President, Boyds Historical Society

██████████
██████████

April 18, 2023

Steve Knight

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Montgomery County Council
Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Regarding: Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation for Weller's Dry-Cleaning Building

Dear Council President Glass and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

I am writing in support of adding the Weller's Dry-Cleaning Building to the County Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The Planning Board's February vote against inclusion of this little midcentury modern building at the corner of Fenton Street and Thayer Avenue in Fenton Village was poorly considered, and went against the recommendations of the approved Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, Planning Staff, Historic Preservation Staff, and the Historic Preservation Commission, all of whom have worked with a great deal of professional care and community input for quite some time to put forth a solid case for protecting this building, the standout example of its era in the roughly 20 blocks comprising Fenton Village.

The February Planning Board hearing included some troubling irregularities (assuming you did not attend, here is [a link to the recording](#) of the hearing; the Wellers portion starts at about 1 hour, 10 minutes). Most notable among irregularities for me was the lack of focus on the redevelopment potential of the property that would include adaptive reuse of the Weller's building. Planning staff knowledgeable about the matter was on hand to elaborate, but no questions were ever asked of them.

For some background, the current owner has assembled the Wellers site along with the two adjacent parcels to the south. They have found a new tenant for the building (Silver Spring Beauty Supply), and their aim is to ultimately redevelop the assembled site, a laudable goal on the face of it. The current owner is representative of Fenton Village: they are Ethiopian immigrants and businesspeople who have worked hard and overcome challenges to attain their success.

I am a practicing architect, and I know the Weller's building and my East Silver Spring community well. I have studied the matter, and it is clear that a redevelopment scenario that includes adaptive reuse of the Weller's property yields only about 10% less total building area than a scenario that does not include adaptive reuse of Weller's. To help illustrate the difference in this particular case, this translates to about 9 fewer residential units, a particularly small sum for a community that has shown a great deal of sophistication and receptivity to growth and development over the last 10 years, absorbing somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 residential units in its 20-block area.

The above said, I appreciate that 10% of buildable area is significant to the current owner. The Planning Staff and Board have many tools at their disposal to help the owner realize the full buildable area potential if they were to retain the Weller's building as part of their redevelopment plans (e.g., adding a partial set back story above the currently allowable building height set forth in the Fenton Village Overlay Zone). I have looked into the matter further, and I have developed the attached study using relatively simple diagrams to illustrate 2 redevelopment scenarios for the assembled site: one that retains the Wellers Building (labeled Typical Redevelopment Scenario), and the other that does not (labeled Adaptive Reuse Redevelopment Scenario). With a little bit of creative thinking and possibly a variance that I think would be quite reasonable to grant, I am confident a redevelopment scenario that retains the Wellers Building can yield nearly the same amount of development yield. I have already shared these observations and the attached study with staff with Council President Glass's office and with Elsa HizeL-McCoy with Planning Staff.

There was one additional point to mention, as it was (inappropriately) raised as a potential barrier to adaptive reuse during the Planning Board hearing: namely that the original use of the building was a dry cleaner. As such, there may be concerns about soil contaminants from its previous use. In my experience, managing potential soil contamination in these situations is very routine, and should not be an impediment to adaptive reuse of the Weller's Building. In fact, the active years of Wellers in its original use coincided with relatively harmless methods of dry cleaning developed after World War II. More information about this can be found in the Preservation Staff's report.

My suggestion as described herein and as illustrated in the attached diagrams is, at its core, about enhancing value for the owner, the community, and the County. The County has not designated anything of significance for the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in any of our developed urban areas in at least a generation. Cases continue to be debated along familiar lines: maintaining property values and development rights vs. preserving some of our past. We have now added to that a need for more housing in those areas. What I am suggesting is a way for us to have them both by thinking a little more broadly about the development allowances of this site. For what it is worth, I have had the opportunity to engage with colleagues internationally who have successfully balanced preservation with development: if my friends in Mumbai and Tel Aviv can do, I am confident we can do it here in Montgomery County too.

I ask that you that you and your fellow Council Members reconsider the poorly reached conclusions of the Planning Board and reassess this matter. I (and many others!) care deeply about this building, the community, and the building's owner. I have tried to briefly outlay what I believe is a simple solution to a problem that has generated a great deal of unnecessary controversy. I hope that you will contact Planning Staff to learn more, I am available at your convenience to discuss the matter further if that would be helpful. I am confident that there is a win-win solution to this matter, and I have full faith in the building's owner to realize it.

Sincerely,



Steve Knight, SARA, AIA, NCARB

attachments (3)



Existing Site
Assembled Parcels at Southeast Corner of
Fenton Street & Thayer Avenue



Typical Redevelopment Scenario

New Adjacent 6-Story Development: 73,000 sf



Adaptive Reuse Redevelopment Scenario

Existing Building: 3,600 sf
 + New Adjacent 6-Story Development: 60,400 sf
 64,000 sf

+ Additional One-Story Bonus for Retaining Existing Building: 9,000 sf
 73,000 sf