

Colmar Manor (68-103)

The Town of Colmar Manor was established as a residential commuter suburb in the early twentieth century. It is located east of the boundary between Washington, D.C. and Prince George's County. The community is situated south of Bladensburg Road, east of Fort Lincoln Cemetery, and west of the Anacostia River.

During the War of 1812 (1812-1815), the area now comprising portions of Colmar Manor was involved in a military clash between American and British forces. On August 24, 1814, during the Battle of Bladensburg, British troops quickly defeated the inexperienced American forces, and marched south to the nation's capital where they captured and burned much of the city.¹

Colmar Manor is best known as the site of nineteenth-century dueling grounds (PG: 68-014). The most famous duel took place between Commodore Stephen Decatur and James Barron. After a long-standing feud between the two men, Barron challenged Decatur to a duel in 1820. Both men were wounded and Decatur died from his injuries. The site, now located in a small park near 37th Avenue and Bladensburg Road, served as a dueling ground for at least 26 recorded fights between 1808 and 1868.²

Martenet's map of 1861 and the Hopkins map of 1878 document the limited development in the area that would become Colmar Manor.³ The Shreve house, constructed circa 1817, is believed to be the first house built in the area and is noted on both the Martenet and Hopkins maps. Unfortunately, the Shreve farmhouse burned in the 1890s and is no longer extant.⁴ The area around Colmar Manor remained farmland until the early twentieth century when part of the Shreve estate was platted and subdivided as Colmar Manor. The name was derived from the "Col" in Columbia and "Mar" from Maryland.⁵

Colmar Manor consists of three subdivisions platted between 1918 and 1920. The first subdivision was platted as Colmar Manor in 1918 by the J.W. Holloway Company.⁶ The Washington, D.C.-based development company advertised lots for sale in Colmar Manor for only \$59.⁷ That same year, the J.W. Holloway Company platted the First Addition to Colmar Manor and sold lots there for \$59.⁸ Holloway advertised Colmar Manor as an attractive subdivision of Washington, D.C., which was "cramped for room and must expand." Colmar Manor's location outside of the District of Columbia was "in the path of this expansion, half an hour from the center of the city." Prospective buyers were encouraged to visit Colmar Manor by trolley car or by automobile, demonstrating the easy commute between Washington, D.C. and the new community.⁹ In 1920, the adjoining neighborhood of Lenox was platted, extending the

¹ Alan Virta, *Prince George's County: A Pictorial History* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company, 1991), 94-95.

² Wanda Carr, "Town Seal of Colmar Manor Reflects History," *The Prince George's Sentinel*, 3 September 1992; "Dueling Creek: A Historical Look," *The Prince George's Post*, September 3-September 9, 1992.

³ Simon J. Martenet, "Atlas of Prince George's County, Maryland, 1861, Adapted from Martenet's Map of Prince George's County, Maryland" (Baltimore: Simon J. Martenet C.E., 1861); G.M. Hopkins, "Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including the County of Prince George Maryland" (Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, C.E., 1878).

⁴ George Denny, Jr., *Proud Past, Promising Future: Cities and Towns in Prince George's County, Maryland* (Brentwood, MD: George D. Denny, Jr., 1997), 130.

⁵ Denny, *Proud Past*, 131.

⁶ Prince George's County Land Records, Circuit Court, Plat Book RNR 2:37.

⁷ "Lots for Sale," *The Washington Post*, 7 February 1919.

⁸ Prince George's County Land Records, Circuit Court, Plat Book RNR 2:41; "Warning!," *The Washington Post*, 22 September 1918.

⁹ "Warning!," *The Washington Post*, 22 September 1918.

grid pattern of Colmar Manor's streets.¹⁰ The Town of Colmar Manor was incorporated in 1927 and in 1931 the Lenox subdivision was added to the Town.¹¹

After incorporation, the Town continued to grow and residents soon appealed to the local government for amenities. In the 1930s, the streets were paved, gutters were installed, and a school and municipal building were constructed. By the 1950s, the Town outgrew the municipal building and a new facility was constructed in 1959 to house the police department and administrative offices.¹² In the 1950s, lots along Bladensburg Road were resubdivided and rezoned to provide space for commercial development. Because of a rapid decline in the Colmar Manor area in the 1960s, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development authorized an urban renewal project which resulted in the community being awarded over \$8 million for improvements and revitalization.¹³ In addition to revitalizing the housing stock and redeveloping the commercial strip along Bladensburg Road, streets were improved, affordable housing was constructed, and the Colmar Manor Park was established on the site of a former landfill.¹⁴

There is one Historic Site in Colmar Manor:

- PG: 68-014, Dueling Grounds, 37th Avenue off Bladensburg Road

There are currently no designated Historic Resources in Colmar Manor.

Windshield Survey

A windshield survey of Colmar Manor was conducted in November 2007. The survey area contains approximately 405 primary resources. The community contains a variety of buildings constructed from circa 1918 to the 1970s. Buildings in Colmar Manor reflect a variety of popular twentieth-century styles, including Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and styles from the Modern Movement. The majority of buildings are one-and-a-half-story Bungalows with varying levels of Craftsman-style detailing. Other forms include ranch houses, split-levels, split-foyers and other small rectangular-shaped dwellings. An apartment building dating from the late 1930s is located at 4209 Newark Road and is the only multi-family dwelling in the community. The topography of the neighborhood is flat and houses are set back slightly from the road. A strip of non-historic commercial development is located along Bladensburg Road. Other building uses include religious and educational. The only public building in Colmar Manor includes the administrative offices of the Town. However, in the immediate future, the Town plans to demolish this building and construct a new municipal center that will house a "gymnasium, inside track, game room, daycare services, multipurpose room with a stage and room for 200 people (more than doubling current capacity), outdoor terrace, full kitchen, meeting space for seniors and youth outreach programs, tutoring workspace and a computer lab."¹⁵

¹⁰ Prince George's County Land Records, Circuit Court, Plat Book RNR 2:54.

¹¹ Denny, *Proud Past*, 131.

¹² Denny, *Proud Past*, 131.

¹³ Denny, *Proud Past*, 132.

¹⁴ KCI Technologies, Inc., "Community Summary Sheet: Colmar Manor," (October 1999), http://www.sha.state.md.us/keepingcurrent/maintainRoadsBridges/bridges/oppe/suburbs/pg_co.pdf.

¹⁵ "Lt. Governor Steele to Present Community Legacy Award in Bladensburg," <http://www.dhcd.state.md.us/Website/NewsEvents/news/20050401.aspx>, accessed 4 January 2008.

Historic District Evaluation

Colmar Manor represents several Prince George's County Heritage Themes including suburban growth and residential architectural styles. Colmar Manor meets the following criteria for designation as a Prince George's County historic district:

- (1)(A)(i) – Colmar Manor was initially platted in 1918 as a commuter suburb and was expanded with the platting of two neighboring subdivisions, the First Addition to Colmar Manor and Lenox. Its prime location on the Route 1 corridor (Bladensburg Road) and along the trolley and railroad lines made the community a successful middle-class commuter suburb. The community grew rapidly and by 1938, the majority of lots in Colmar Manor were improved with modest dwellings.
- (2)(A)(i) – Colmar Manor contains a collection of buildings that span from circa 1918 through the 1970s and reflect popular twentieth-century styles. Buildings in Colmar Manor present a variety of uses, including residential, municipal, and religious. Popular architectural styles in Colmar Manor include the Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and more limited examples from the Modern Movement.
- (2)(A)(iv) – Colmar Manor demonstrates the evolution of popular style and taste in domestic architecture in the first half of the twentieth century. Colmar Manor is a cohesive and unified community that still functions as a modest residential commuter suburb in Prince George's County.

Colmar Manor also meets the following National Register criteria for designation as a historic district:

Criterion A – Colmar Manor meets Criterion A as a planned residential commuter suburb established in the first quarter of the twentieth century to meet the growing needs of the middle-class population of Washington, D.C. The community grew steadily from the initial platting in 1918 and was largely improved by 1938. The community's development was directly related to the variety of transportation resources available nearby, including Bladensburg Road and the electric streetcar line.

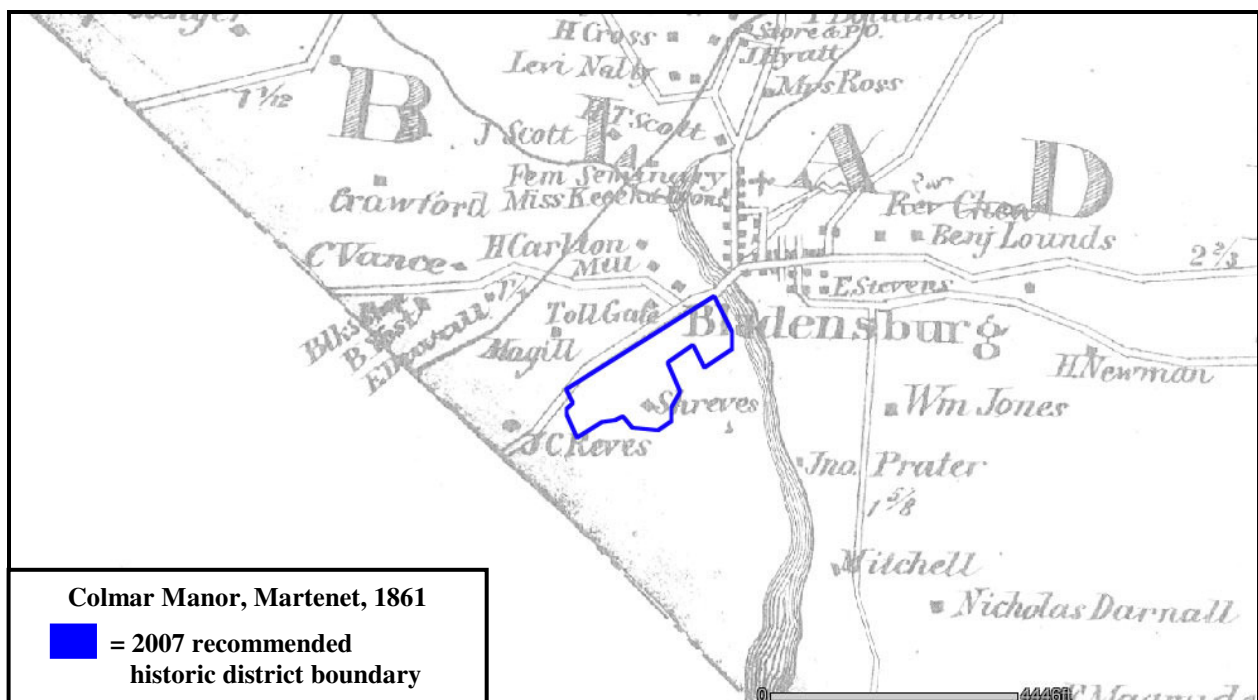
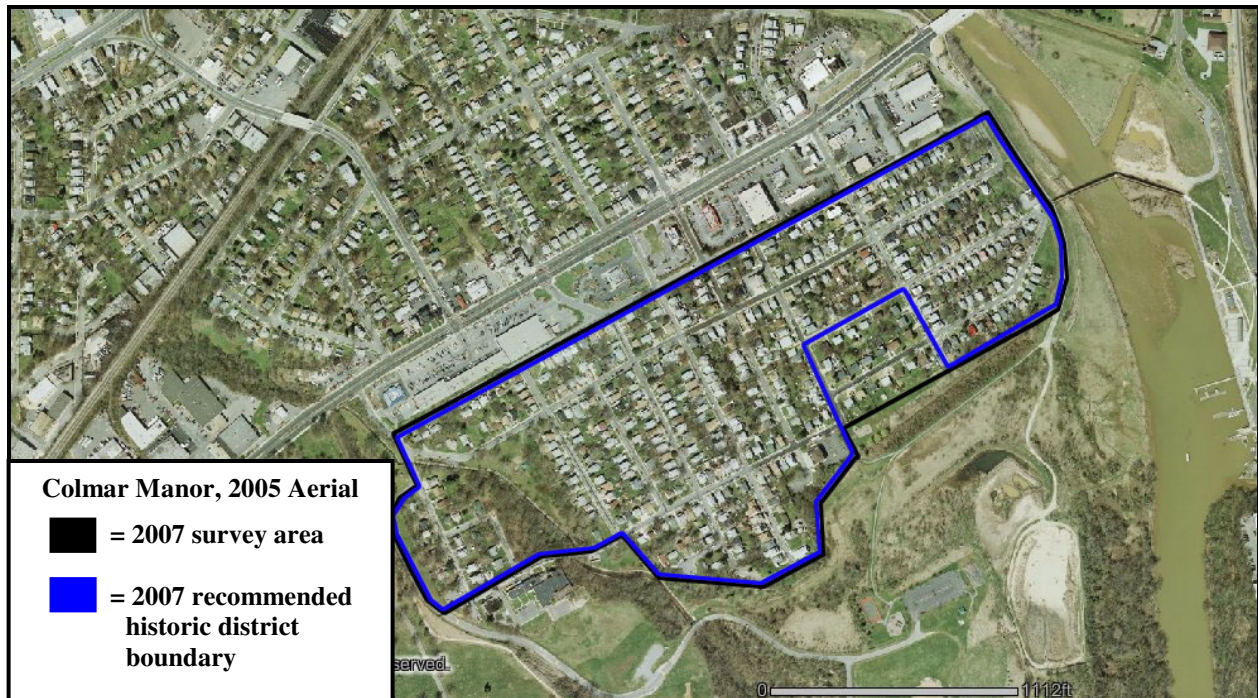
Criterion C – Colmar Manor meets Criterion C for its variety of domestic buildings that demonstrate popular twentieth-century architectural styles and convey the evolution of suburban architecture in Prince George's County. Common architectural styles presented in Colmar Manor include Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and less frequently, examples from the Modern Movement. The cohesive community remains intact with limited modern infill. The smaller size and minimal ornamentation of the houses in Colmar Manor reflect their use for middle-class residents.

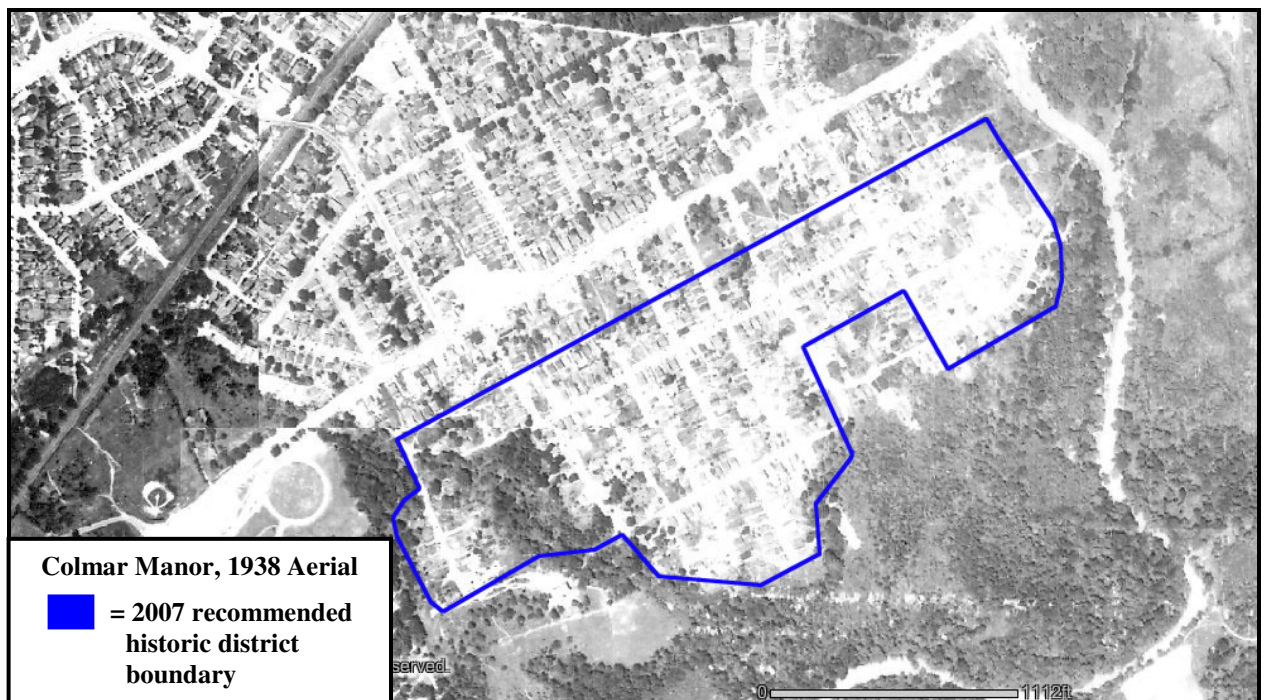
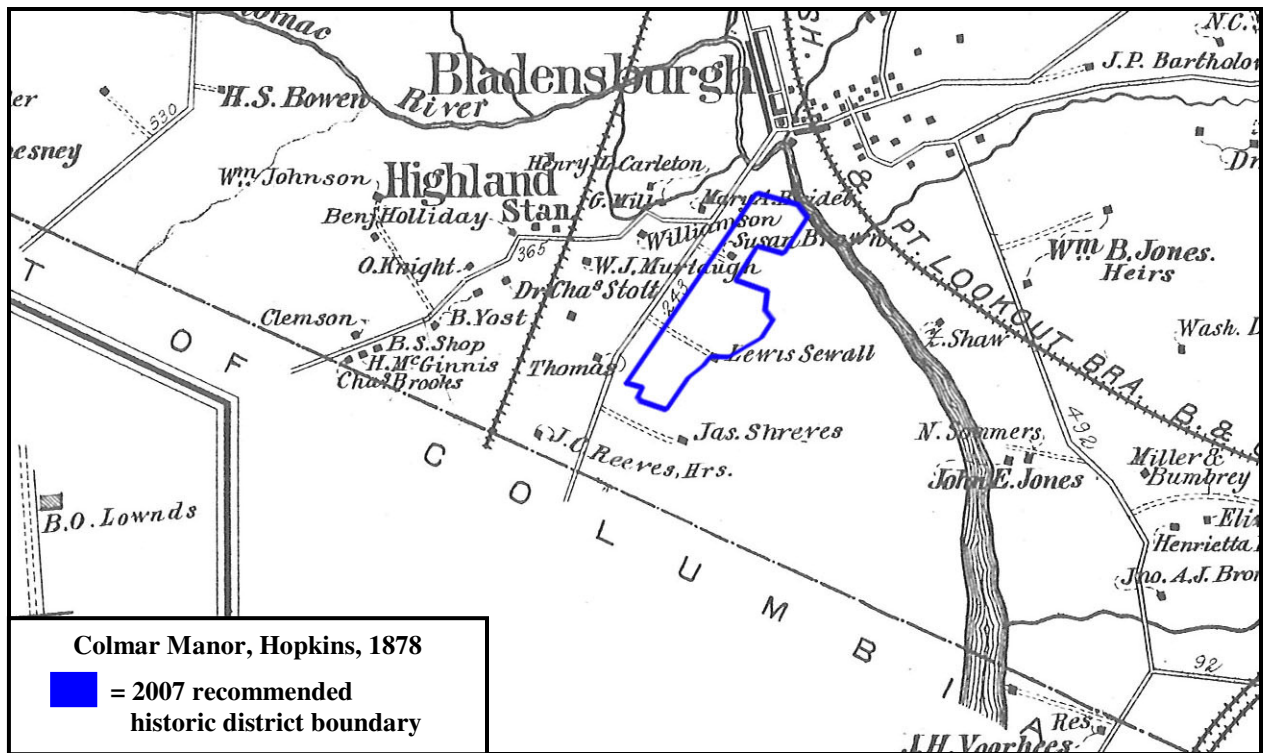
Although a larger area of the Town of Colmar Manor was surveyed, the recommended historic district boundaries encompass the original plats of Colmar Manor, the First Addition to Colmar Manor, and Lenox, with some limited exclusions. The buildings located along Bladensburg Road are primarily commercial buildings dating from the mid-1950s to the present. These buildings are predominately non-historic and do not reflect the same period of development as the residential area of Colmar Manor. Those buildings that are historic have been altered and reflect a substantial loss of integrity that would make them non-contributing resources in a historic district. A block of buildings located on Monroe and Lawrence Streets have also been excluded from the historic district. These dwellings were constructed in the 1970s as part of the urban renewal project in Colmar Manor. The non-historic buildings illustrate a

different form not typical in Colmar Manor and do not reflect the same period of development as Colmar Manor.

Colmar Manor has retained its integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and association. Some buildings have been altered, which has resulted in a minimal loss of workmanship and materials. However, collectively the district retains its integrity of workmanship and materials.

Prepared by EHT Tracerics, Inc.
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Looking southwest, 3900 block of Newark Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southeast, 3600 block of 39th Avenue (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking east, 3901-3903-3905 Newton Street (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southwest, 3909-3911 Lawrence Street (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northeast, 3301 40th Place (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking west, 4110 Newton Street, Colmar Manor Bible Church (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, 3602 41st Avenue (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southwest, 4209 Newark Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southeast, 3500 block of 43rd Avenue (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southwest, 4200 block of Monroe Street (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southwest, 4321-4319 Newark Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)