Upper Marlboro (79-019)

Located in central Prince George's County, the Town of Upper Marlboro was established when the General Assembly of the Province of Maryland passed the "Act for the Advancement of Trade and Erecting Ports and Towns" in 1706 and 1707 in order to establish commercial centers in Maryland.[1] The town was already a gathering place for merchants, who often spent their time at Robert Robertson's tavern, established in 1703.[2] The community was first known as the Town of Marlborough, but was soon changed to Upper Marlborough, distinguishing it from (Lower) Marlborough in Calvert County. In the early twentieth century, the name was commonly shortened from Marlborough to Marlboro' then finally to Marlboro, as it is known today. Tradition maintains both towns were named after John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, a hero in the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714).[3]

By 1718, county residents petitioned to have the county seat moved from Charles Town to Upper Marlboro, which was completed in 1721.[4] Chosen for its location on the Western Branch of the Patuxent River, the area was thought to be a convenient trading location. With its designation as the county seat, Upper Marlboro soon became the social, political, and commercial center of Prince George's County. Because of its location near the river, in 1747, Upper Marlboro was designated as an inspection site for tobacco. In order to protect the quality of tobacco being shipped to England, all tobacco grown in Maryland had to pass through inspections sites at Nottingham, Piscataway, Upper Marlboro, or Bladensburg before it was allowed to be publicly sold.[5] The first courthouse was constructed in 1721 and was later replaced in 1798. The completion of the Assembly Hall in the 1750s provided opportunities for social events, including balls, concerts, plays, and opera productions. Horse racing was an important sport in eighteenth-century Maryland, and Upper Marlboro soon became a popular destination for those seeking to watch the races.[6] In the 1760s, the first post office was established in the town.[7]

As the Patuxent River and the Western Branch silted they became unnavigable for large ships transporting tobacco. As a result, Baltimore became the commercial hub of tobacco in Maryland. Even without the tobacco industry, the thriving commercial and political center of Upper Marlboro supported the local economy in the nineteenth century. Martenet's Map of 1861 shows a well-developed small town, mostly centered on Main Street. Most of the residential buildings are located to the west, while the commercial development was primarily located in the east and centered around the court house. Upper Marlboro provided a number of shops and amenities for its residents and visitors. The town was served by several hotels, law offices, and other stores that included a barber shop, carriage factory, tailor, cabinet maker, tinner, doctor's office, and the offices of the *Planter's Advocate* and the *Marlboro Gazette*. By 1861, at least three churches were constructed within the town for the Catholic, Methodist, and Episcopal congregations. Just a few years later in 1878, the Hopkins map documents considerable new growth in the town. Many new residences and stores were constructed, along with two new public schools, one for the education of boys, and one for girls. The most significant development was the addition of the Popes

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[1] Marina King, "The Tobacco Industry in Prince George's County, 1680-1940," in *Historic Contexts in Prince George's County: Short Papers on Settlement Patterns, Transportation and Cultural History* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1991), 69-71.
[2] Susan G. Pearl, "Early Taverns in Prince George's County, 1703-1862, " in *Historic Contexts in Prince George's County: Short Papers on Settlement Patterns, Transportation and Cultural History* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1991), 61-64.
[3] Pearl, "Early Towns," 1.
[3] King, "The Tobacco Industry," 69-71.
[4] Pearl, "Early Towns," 2.
[5] King, "The Tobacco Industry," 69-71.
[6] Pearl, "Early Towns," 2.
[7] Susan G. Pearl, "Upper Marlboro History (August 2001), 1.

Creek line of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad to the east of town. The map shows the location of the passenger station and the freight station.[8]

Upper Marlboro is also an important African-American community. After the Civil War (1861-1865), a number of freedmen purchased land in Upper Marlboro and constructed a Methodist meetinghouse. Working with the Freedman's Bank, the community established a school for the local black children in 1867. The small African-American community began to grow and soon built houses within the town limits. During the construction of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad near Upper Marlboro, another small black community developed on the eastern fringes of town (outside the survey area), near the railroad lines. Known as Sugar Hill, the neighborhood was populated by families who assisted in the construction of the railroad in the 1860s and 1870s.[9]

During the twentieth century, Upper Marlboro continued to expand. Several fires resulted in the rebuilding of structures, particularly commercial buildings along Main Street, while some older buildings received new facades and renovations.[10] In the early 1940s, the Victorian-era county courthouse was extensively remodeled in the Colonial Revival style. The original building was well-disguised by the addition of a large portico, flanking wings, and a bell tower. During a renovation in 2004, the courthouse suffered a disastrous fire; the building is currently being rehabilitated.

There are fifteen Historic Sites in Upper Marlboro:

- PG: 79-019-01, Thomas J. Turner House, 14500 Elm Street
- PG: 79-019-02, Jarboe-Bowie House, 14504 Elm Street
- PG: 79-019-13, Kingston & Cemetery (NR), 5415 Old Crain Highway
- PG: 79-019-14, Church Street House (Talbott House), 14519 Church Street
- PG: 79-019-15, Trinity Episcopal Church & Cemetery, 14519 Church Street
- PG: 79-019-16, Content (NR), 14518 Church Street
- PG: 79-019-17, Trelawn (Roberts House), 14519 Elm Street
- PG: 79-019-18, Digges-Sasscer House, 14507 Elm Street
- PG: 79-019-20, Union (Memorial) Methodist Church, 14418 Old Marlboro Pike
- PG: 79-019-21, Traband House (Old Mill Place) (NR), 14204 Old Marlboro Pike
- PG: 79-019-25, St. Mary's Beneficial Society Hall (NR), 14825 Pratt Street
- PG: 79-019-27, Crandell-Rothstein House, 14920 Main Street
- PG: 79-019-28, Darnall's Chance (NR) (Wardrop-Buck House), 14800 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
- PG: 79-019-45, A.T. Brooke House, 5600 Old Crain Highway
- PG: 79-019-61, Old Upper Marlboro Post Office, 14730 Main Street

There are five Historic Resources in Upper Marlboro:

- PG: 79-019-22, Dr. William Beanes' Grave (Academy Site), 14554 Elm Street
- PG: 79-019-23, Magruder Law Office, 14708 Main Street
- PG: 79-019-51, Marlboro Elementary School (Old), 14554 Elm Street

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[8] 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).
[9] Susan G. Pearl, *Prince George's County African-American Heritage Survey, 1996* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1996), 86. This community is located on Peerless Avenue, northeast of the town's center.
[10] Pearl, "Upper Marlboro History," 2-3.

- PG: 79-019-52, Marlboro High School (Old), 14524 Elm Street
- PG: 79-019-64, Crain Highway Monument, 14500 block of Main Street

Windshield Survey

A windshield survey of Upper Marlboro was conducted in July 2007. During the survey, the previous survey boundaries were expanded to include most of the town center of Upper Marlboro. Upper Marlboro contains a remarkable collection of buildings from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century that reflect the evolution of Upper Marlboro from a rural village to a thriving small town and county seat. The majority of extant buildings date from the mid- to late nineteenth century. Popular styles found in Upper Marlboro include both high-style and vernacular interpretations of Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman styles. Building types include I-houses, L-shaped plans, American Foursquares, bungalows, Cape Cods, and ranch houses. Late-twentieth-century infill is concentrated on the outskirts of Upper Marlboro, particularly in the north and northwest part of town. Houses within the town are setback from the street on grassy lots. Concentrated along Main Street, the commercial buildings are typically constructed side-by-side and are set very close to the street. The topography of Upper Marlboro is generally flat, and the majority of buildings are located on higher ground above the Western Branch and a large man-made pond in the northeast section of the town.

Buildings in Upper Marlboro represent residential, commercial, educational, political, governmental, and religious uses. There are still a few small agricultural outbuildings that remain within the town limits.

A reconnaissance-level survey of all buildings located within the 2007 survey area should be completed in order to document and more fully understand the historic context, integrity, and significance of Upper Marlboro.

Historic District Evaluation

Upper Marlboro represents numerous Prince George's County Heritage Themes including early towns, later churches, commerce, taverns, horse racing, the law, political history, social history, black history, and residential architectural styles. Commercial development in Upper Marlboro largely occurred around the governmental buildings located in the center of the town. The majority of residential development occurred outside of the town center, away from the commercial and governmental buildings. Because these resources are clustered together and represent two distinct and separate historic contexts and areas of significance, Upper Marlboro contains two potential historic districts—one for the residential development in the western and northern portion of Upper Marlboro, and one for the commercial/governmental area located in the eastern and southern portion of the town. Further, these areas have distinctly different periods of significance.

Upper Marlboro Commercial/Governmental Historic District

The commercial and governmental areas of Upper Marlboro meet the following Prince George's County criteria for designation as a historic district:

(1)(A)(i) – Upper Marlboro is representative of the evolution of a small rural village into a thriving town supported by commercial and political activity. Upper Marlboro's designation as the county seat in the eighteenth century makes it an important part of Prince George's County's political history.

(1)(A)(iv) – Upper Marlboro exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, and historic heritage of Prince George's County. Upper Marlboro functioned as the center of cultural, social, and political life for residents of the County during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The town was also an important trading post and commercial center that revolved around tobacco production. Upper Marlboro remains the center of political activity in Prince George's County.

(2)(A)(iv) – Upper Marlboro merits recognition as a district whose buildings reflect the growth and development of a rural village to a small, self-sufficient town, from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century.

Upper Marlboro's commercial and governmental area is also eligible as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places. The community meets the following criteria:

Criterion A – Upper Marlboro is a fine example of an intact small town that reflects development over time, from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century. Upper Marlboro has continued to retain its place as the center of government and politics in Prince George's County since the early eighteenth century.

Criterion C – The commercial, political, and religious buildings of Upper Marlboro reflect distinct periods of time from the eighteenth century through the late twentieth century and show the influence of popular architectural styles that include Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Modern Movement, and Brutalism.

In addition to its historic significance, Upper Marlboro has retained its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Archival research and documentation must be conducted to further develop the historic context, particularly the area(s) and period(s) of significance for Upper Marlboro.

Upper Marlboro Residential Historic District

The residential portion of Upper Marlboro meets the following Prince George's County criteria for designation as a historic district:

(1)(A)(i) – The residential development in Upper Marlboro was a direct result of the town's designation as the county seat in the eighteenth century. The residential buildings are typically located on the outer perimeter town's center, which contains the government and commercial buildings. Further, Upper Marlboro is also representative of the African-American community and their transition from slavery to freedom in the post-Civil War era.

(1)(A)(iv) – Upper Marlboro exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, and historic heritage of Prince George's County. Upper Marlboro functioned as the center of cultural, social, and political life for residents of the County during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because Upper Marlboro was an important trading post and commercial center in the County, residents moved to the area to be within close proximity of this bustling town.

(2)(A)(i) – Upper Marlboro contains an exemplary collection of buildings that spans three centuries and reflect the popular styles of the time. Distinct styles found in Upper Marlboro include both high-style and vernacular interpretations of Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman styles. There is little modern infill within the Upper Marlboro survey area.

(2)(A)(iv) – Upper Marlboro merits recognition as a district whose buildings reflect the growth and development of a rural village to a small, self-sufficient town, from the eighteenth century to the twentieth centuries. The residential buildings in Upper Marlboro show this evolution through distinct periods of development.

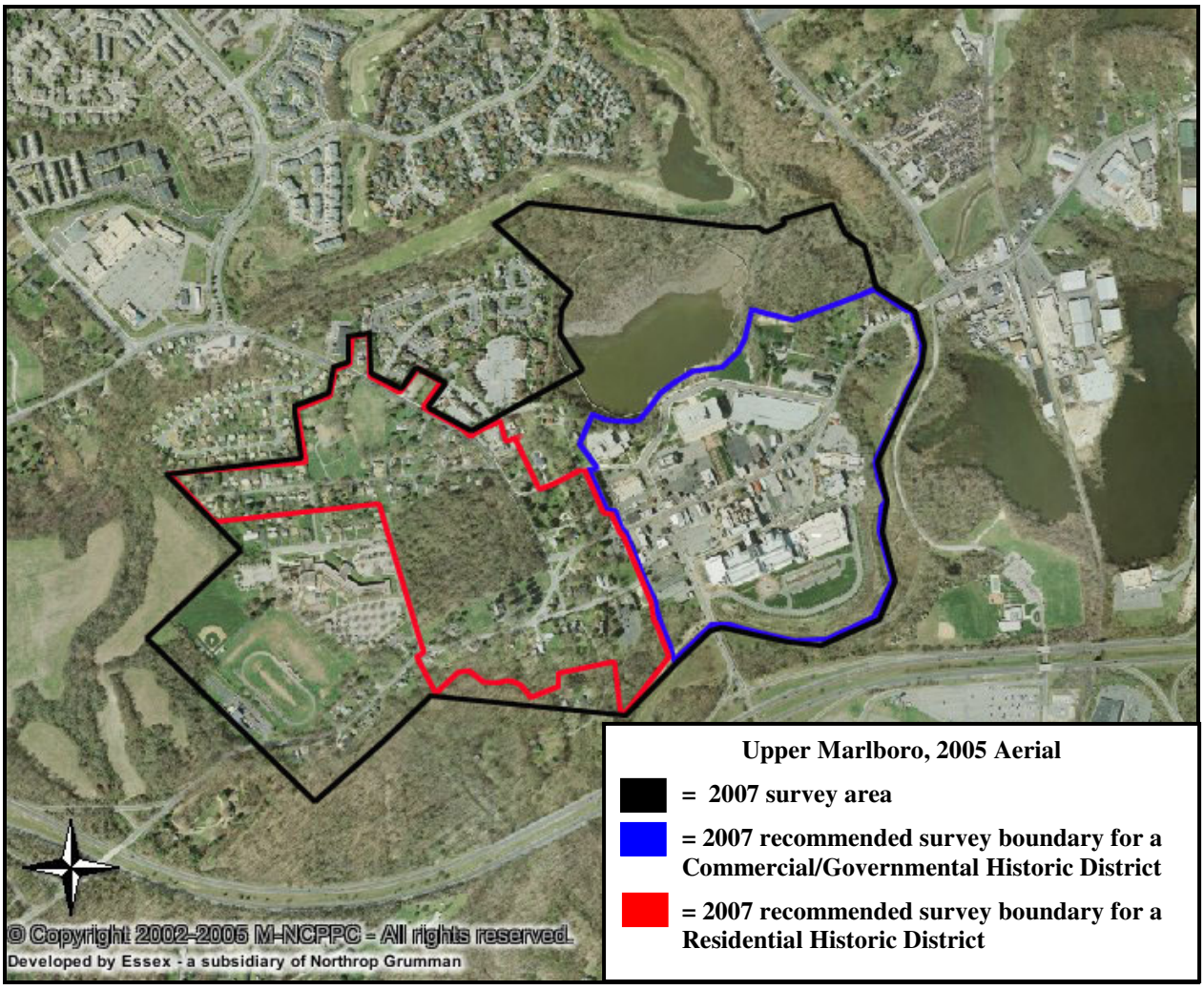
Upper Marlboro's residential area is also eligible as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places. The community meets the following criteria:

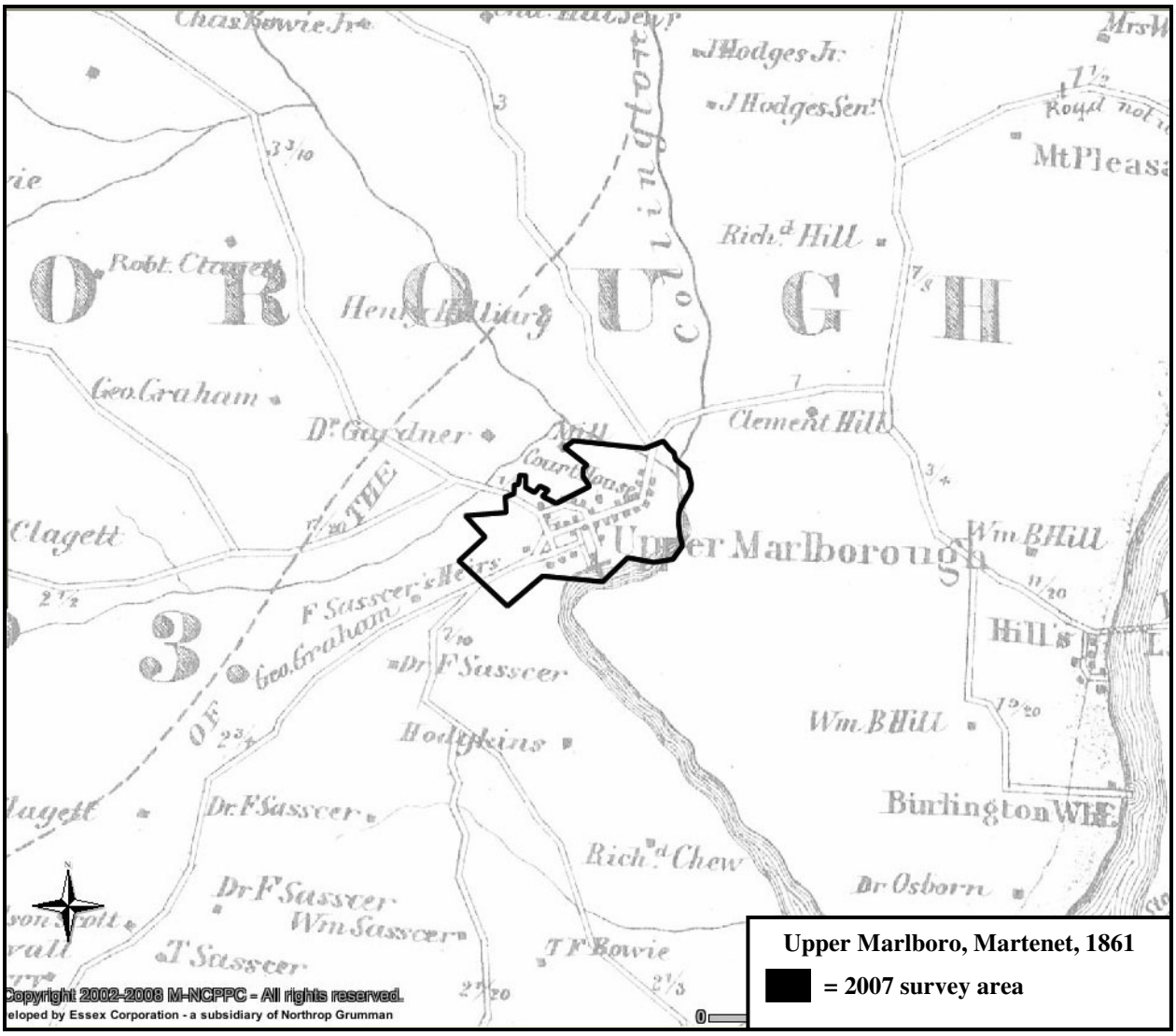
Criterion A – Upper Marlboro is a fine example of an intact small town that reflects development over time, from the eighteenth century through the twentieth century. As the center of government and politics in Prince George's County since the early eighteenth century, Upper Marlboro has a distinctly separate residential community that developed on the outskirts of this town center. The residential buildings reflect the continual growth and stability of the community. Upper Marlboro was also the site of a significant African-American population in the post-Civil War years and demonstrates their transition from slavery to freedom.

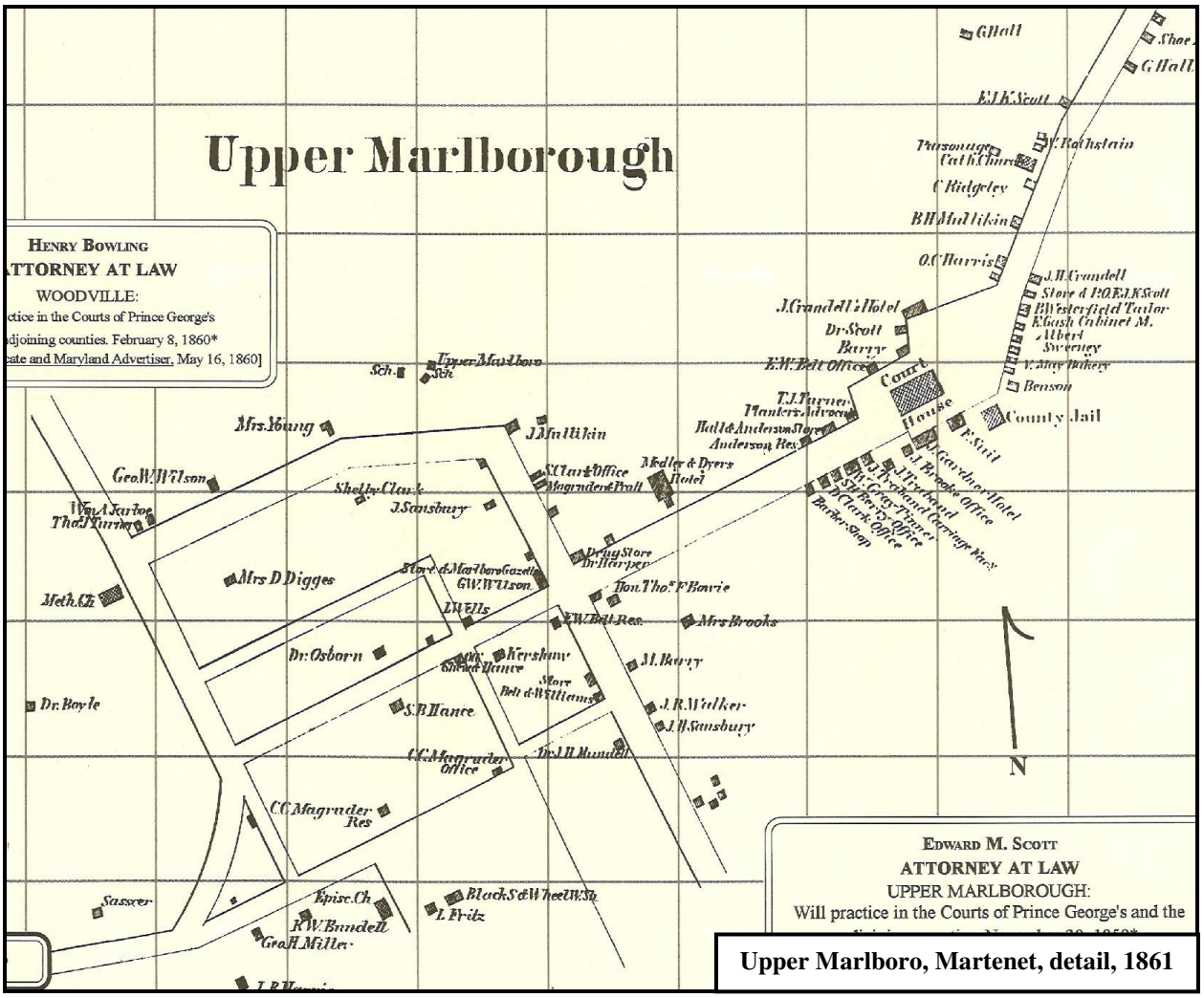
Criterion C – Upper Marlboro contains a variety of architecture that reflects distinct periods of time from the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Styles found in Upper Marlboro include both high-style and vernacular interpretations of Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman styles.

In addition to its historic significance, Upper Marlboro has retained its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Archival research and documentation must be conducted to further develop the historic contexts for both the commercial/governmental and residential areas, particularly the area(s) and period(s) of significance for Upper Marlboro.

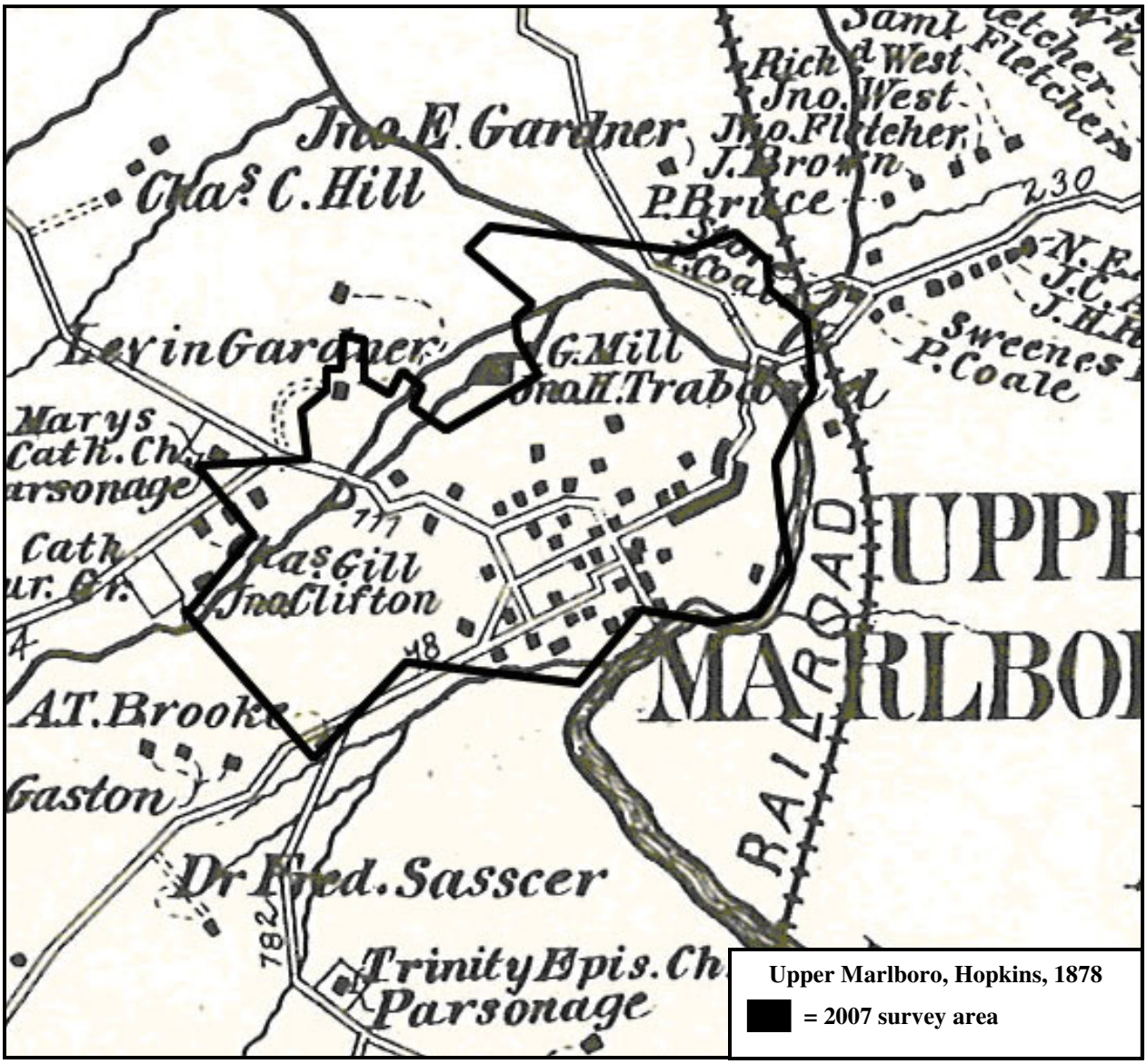
Prepared by EHT Traceries, Inc.
November 2007

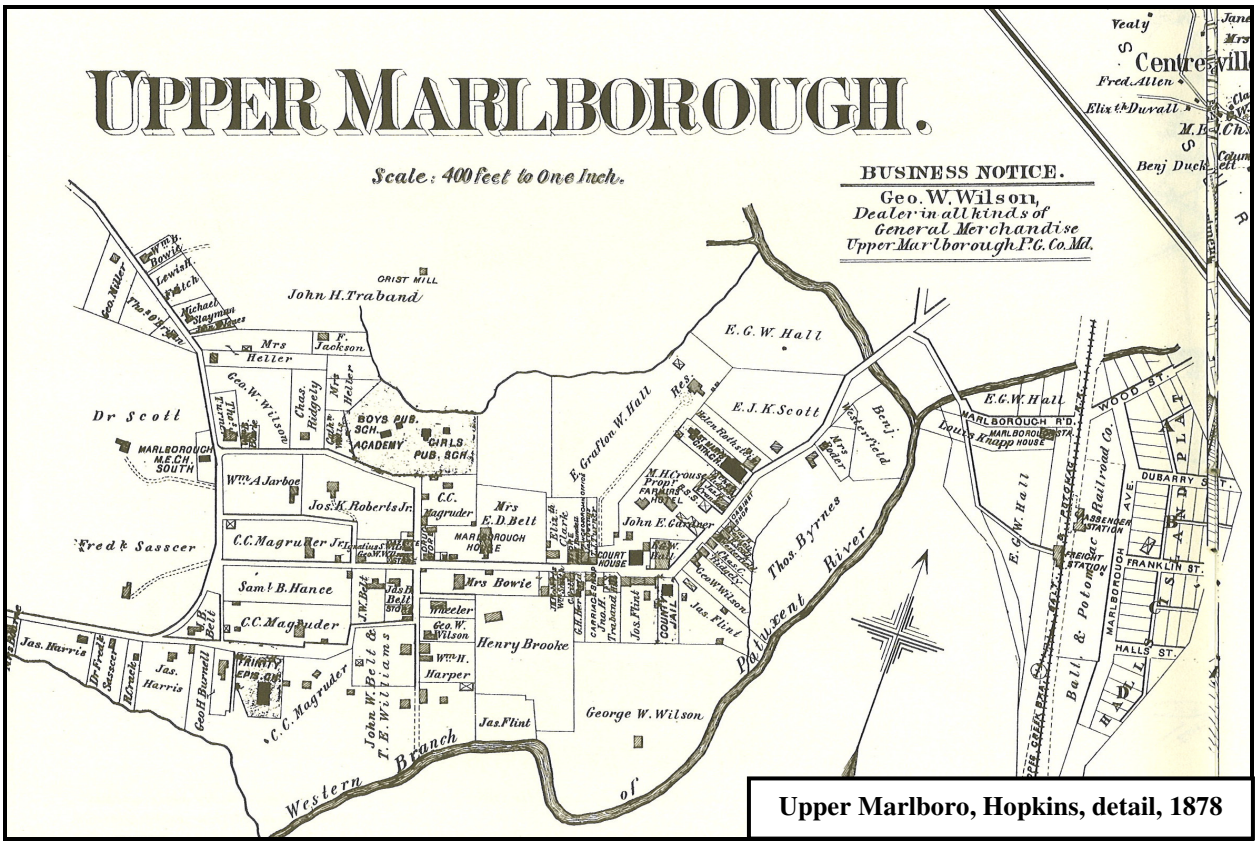

Upper Marlboro, 2005 Aerial
= 2007 survey area
= 2007 recommended survey boundary for a Commercial/Governmental Historic District
= 2007 recommended survey boundary for a Residential Historic District
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Developed by Essex - a subsidiary of Northrop Grumman


Upper Marlboro, Martenet, 1861
= 2007 survey area
Upper Marlborough
Clement Hill
Rich.d Hill
Wm B Hill
Dr F Sussex
Rich.d Chew
Dr Osborn
Burlington
Hodgkins
Geo. Graham
Dr Gardner
Clagett
Mt Pleasa
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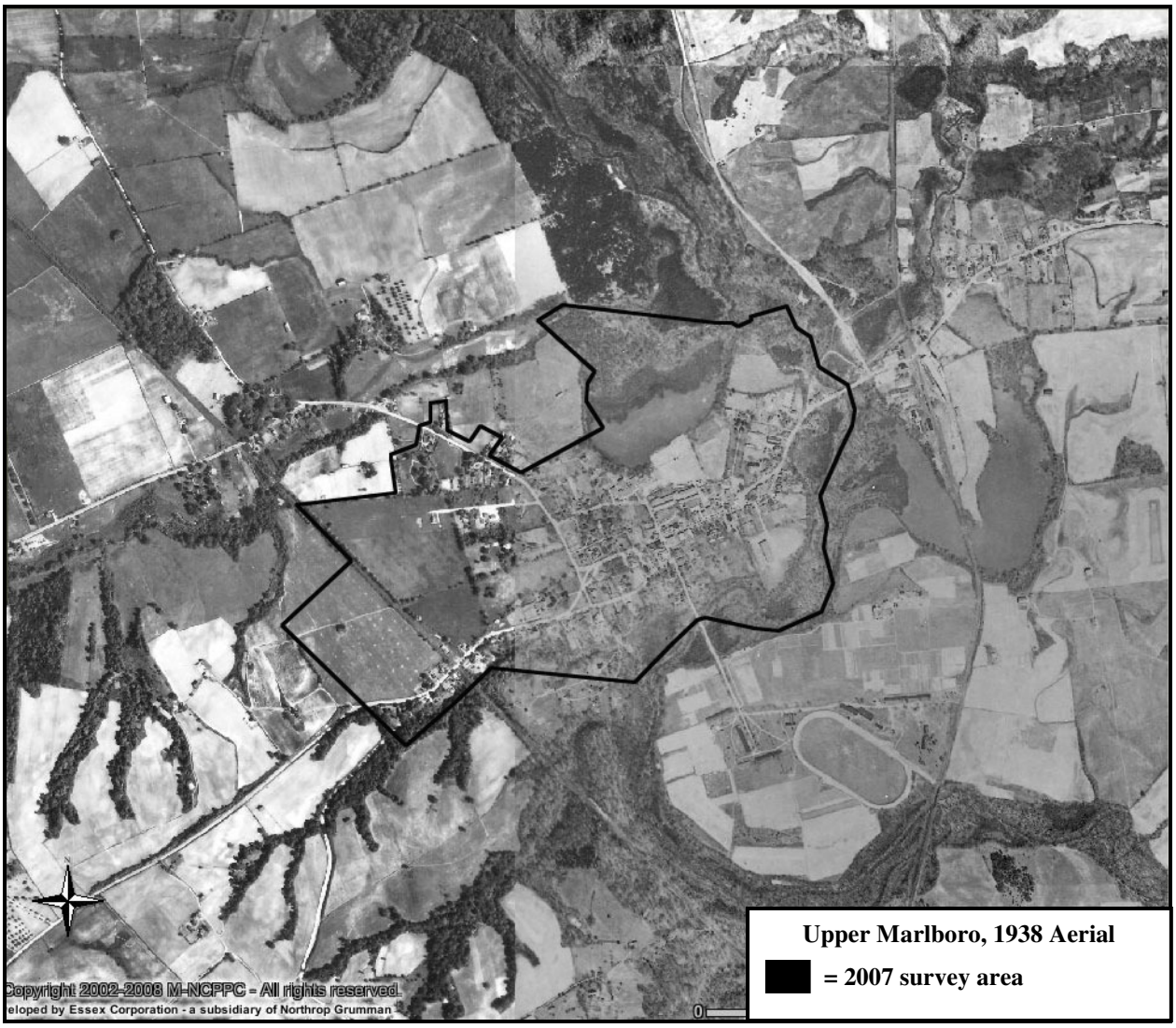


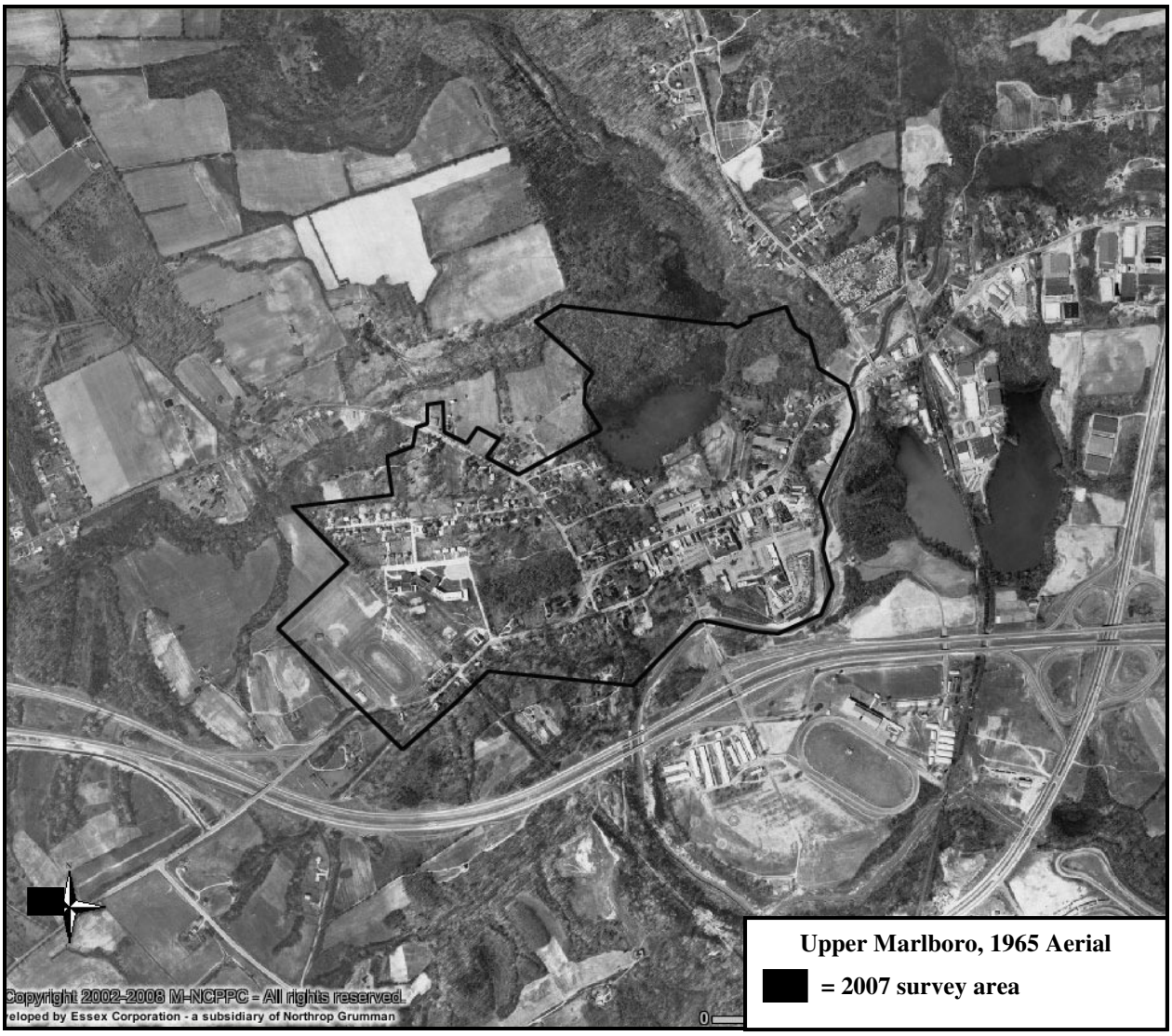
Upper Marlboro, Martenet, detail, 1861


Jno E. Gardner
Chas C. Hill
Jno. West
Jno. Fletcher
J. Brown
P. Bruce
230
Levin Gardner
G. Mill
Sweenes
P. Coale
Marys
Cath. Ch.
Parsonage
Cath
Chas Gill
Jno Clifton
RAILROAD
A.T. Brooke
Gaston
Dr Fred. Sasscer
Trinity Epis. Ch
Parsonage
Upper Marlboro, Hopkins, 1878
= 2007 survey area



Upper Marlboro, Hopkins, detail, 1878


Upper Marlboro, 1938 Aerial
= 2007 survey area
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Upper Marlboro, 1965 Aerial
= 2007 survey area
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Looking north, Darnall's Chance (PG: 79-019-28) (NR), 14800 Governor Oden Bowie Drive (*M-NCPPC, Historic Preservation Section, 2007*)



Looking west, 14920 Main Street (Crandell-Rothstein House, PG: 79-019-27) – 14908 Main Street, Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking southwest, 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, County Administration Building (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking northeast, Old Marlboro Elementary School (PG: 79-019-51), 14554 Elm Street (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking north, 14508 Elm Street (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking northwest, 14504 Elm Street (Jarboe-Bowie House, PG: 79-019-02) - 14500 Elm Street (Thomas J. Turner House, PG: 79-019-01) (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking southwest, 14407-14401 Old Marlboro Pike (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking southwest, 14200 Rectory Lane, Trinity Church Cemetery (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking north, Traband House/Old Mill Place (PG: 79-019-21) (NR), 14204 Old Marlboro Pike (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking east, 14106-14112 Rectory Lane (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking south, 14201 School Lane (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking east, Crain Highway Monument (PG: 79-019-64), intersection of Old Crain Highway and Main Street (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking northwest, 14110 Rectory Lane (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking east down Main Street, 14604-14626 Main Street (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking north, 14800-14808 Main Street (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking southwest, 14713 Main Street, Clagett Building (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking north, 14735 Main Street, Prince George's County Courthouse (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking west, corner of Judge Loveless Drive and Judges Drive (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)