

Croom (86A-027)

The village of Croom is located in rural southeastern Prince George's County. Centered around the intersections of Croom Road, Duley Station Road, and St. Thomas Church Road, the small village of approximately 50 buildings represents rural development in the county from the 1740s through the 1960s. Croom was named for a tract of land called "Croome," located northwest of the village patented by the Clagett family in 1671. Thomas John Clagett, born on his family's Croom homestead, was the first Episcopalian Bishop consecrated in America.¹ In 1800, Clagett was named Chaplain of the United States Senate. He served at St. Thomas Church (PG: 86A-027-07) from 1780 to 1810, when he founded Trinity Episcopal Church in Upper Marlboro.²

The village of Croom began to develop in the mid-nineteenth century as a rural village centered around St. Thomas Church (c. 1745), several residences, and John Coffren's general store (c. 1853). By 1857, a post office was established in Croom and was operated out of Coffren's store.³ Because of its location between the port of Nottingham and the county seat of Upper Marlboro, Croom Road became an important thoroughfare in Prince George's County.⁴ Croom Road acted as a significant north-south route supposedly established by Native Americans.⁵ By 1745, the road was officially recognized, and in 1794, appeared on Dennis Griffith's map of Maryland.⁶ By the 1860s, Croom had expanded to include the residences and shops of a miller, a carpenter, a mechanic, and a blacksmith. By this time, a new parsonage and a schoolhouse were erected to serve the small community. The 1861 Martenet map documents these buildings clustered in the small village.⁷ The 1878 Hopkins map shows very little change in the village.⁸

The majority of buildings in Croom date from the late nineteenth century through the 1930s, with limited infill from the mid- to late twentieth century. Most of the buildings are single-family dwellings, although agricultural buildings, a church and rectory, and several commercial buildings exist. The survey district is located on both sides of Croom Road with Croom Airport Road marking the northern boundary and West End Farm as the southern boundary.

There are seven Historic Sites in Croom:

- PG: 86A-027-06, Dr. William H. Gibbons House, 10205 Croom Road
- PG: 86A-027-07, St. Thomas' Episcopal Church & Cemetery (NR), 14300 St. Thomas Church Road
- PG: 86A-027-08, St. Thomas' Church Rectory, 10108 Croom Road
- PG: 86A-027-09, Croom Schoolhouse, 10100 Croom Road
- PG: 86A-027-10, Coffren House (NR), 10007 Croom Road

¹ Marina King, "Croom Historic Survey," Maryland Historical Trust, State Historic Sites Inventory Form (April 1986), 8:1.

² John M. Walton, Jr., "A Brief Guide to Historic Upper Marlborough," M-NCPPC (October 1976), 19; King, "Croom," 8:1.

³ Susan G. Pearl, *Prince George's County African-American Heritage Survey, 1996* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1996), 100.

⁴ Marina King, "John W. Coffren House and Store," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (January 1986), 8:5.

⁵ King, "Croom," 8:1.

⁶ King, "Croom," 8:1.

⁷ 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).

⁸ G.M. Hopkins, "Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including the County of Prince George Maryland" (Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, C.E., 1878).

- PG: 86A-027-11, Coffren Store (NR), 10007 Croom Road
- PG: 86A-027-25, Blanche Ogle House, 9912 Croom Road

There is one Historic Resource in Croom:

- PG: 86A-027-24, Croom Institute Site, 14409 St. Thomas Church Road

Windshield Survey

A windshield survey of Croom was conducted in July 2007. Croom has maintained its rural landscape and appears to be little altered since the last survey of the village in 1986. The gently rolling farmland contains buildings that date from the mid-eighteenth century (St. Thomas Church) through the 1960s that represent a variety of styles, most of which are vernacular buildings ornamented to reflect popular styles. The majority of buildings in Croom date from the late nineteenth century through the late 1930s. Buildings in the survey district have a variety of setbacks; some are located close to the road, while others are set away from the road, down winding private drives. Styles represented in the village include Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and vernacular interpretations of these popular styles. Building forms include L- and T-shaped plans (both front- and side-gabled roofs), I-house, front-gable-with-wing, rectangular, Bungalow, Cape Cod, and ranch houses. There is very limited infill from the mid- to late twentieth century. Only two commercial buildings were noted in the Croom survey district; both are general stores that provide groceries and necessities for the local population.

Because of the convenient location and open land, new residential developments are planned south of Croom, near West End Farm (86A-005, 10709 Croom Road) and west of Croom Road. Although outside of the survey district, these new developments are indicative of the pressure on rural villages in Prince George's County to develop pastoral farmland into planned residential communities.

Historic District Evaluation

Croom represents several Prince George's County Heritage Themes including colonial churches, commerce, agricultural heritage, War of 1812, transportation, and residential architectural styles. The Croom survey district meets the following Prince George's County criteria for designation as a historic district:

- (1)(A)(i) – Croom reflects the development of rural agricultural villages in Prince George's County. The variety of residential, commercial, agricultural, and religious buildings that remain extant in Croom document the growth of rural villages in Prince George's County. In addition, Croom Road was an important north-south transportation route between Nottingham and Upper Marlboro. Because Croom Road was a trail used by Native Americans, Croom has the potential to yield information about the Native Americans who lived and traveled through the area.
- (1)(A)(iv) – Croom reflects the economic and commercial heritage of Prince George's County with the establishment of several commercial buildings that date from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century.
- (2)(A)(i) – Croom is significant as one of the few communities that still retains its characteristics as a rural village, and whose architecture has remained largely intact. The variety of vernacular dwellings reflects the diversity of individuals who settled in the area.
- (2)(A)(iv) – Croom merits recognition as a district whose buildings reflect the growth and development of a rural village in Prince George's County.

West End Farm (a designated Historic Site, PG: 86A-005, 10709 Croom Road), located south of the 1986 survey, was included as a part of a Croom Historic District. There seems to be little reason to exclude the property, which would be a contributing building in a historic district.

Croom is also eligible as a National Register Historic District. The village meets the following criteria:

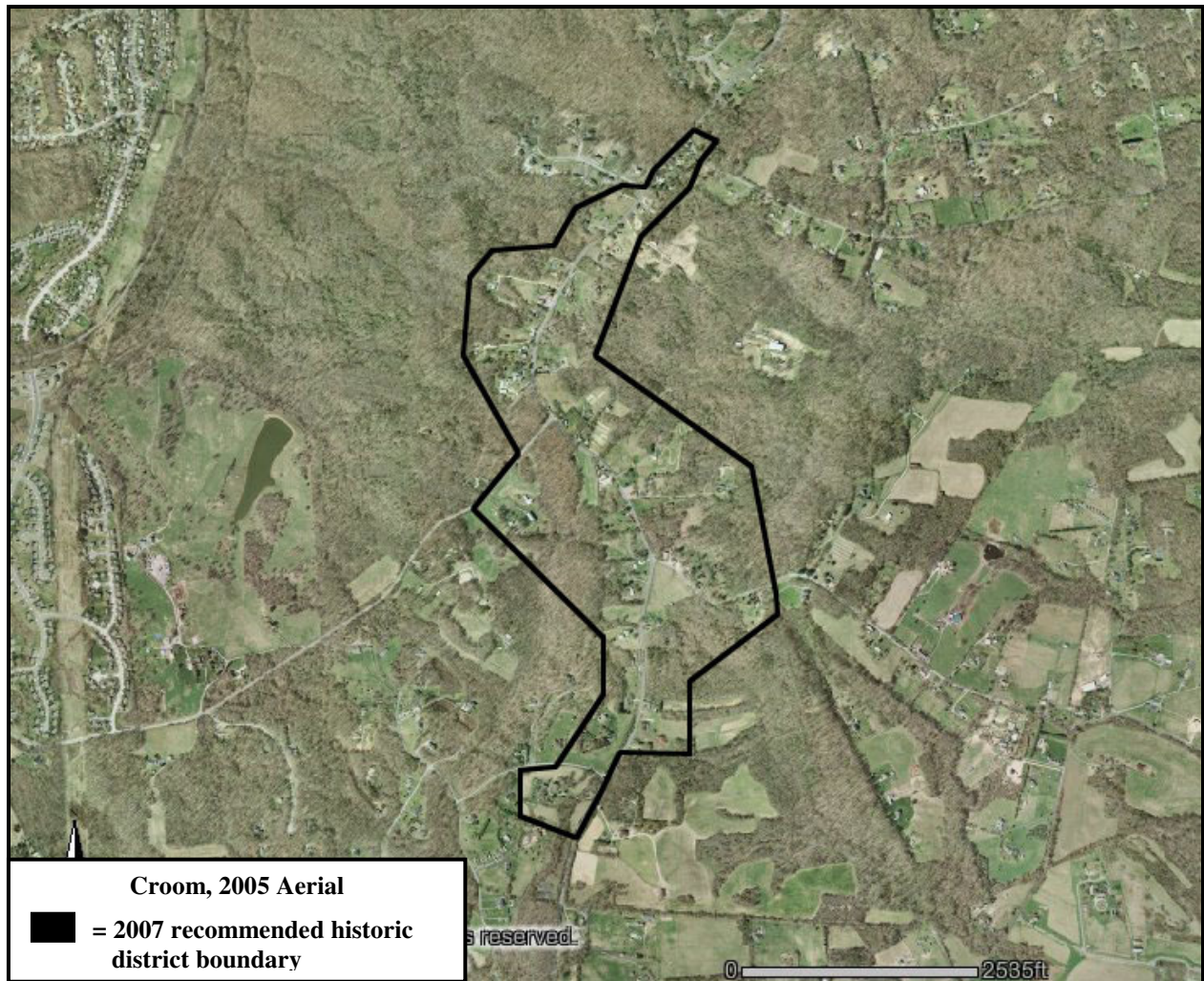
Criterion A – Croom reflects the development of rural agricultural villages in Prince George's County from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The variety of residential, commercial, agricultural, and religious buildings that remain extant in Croom typify the growth of rural villages. In addition, Croom Road was an important north-south transportation route between Nottingham and Upper Marlboro, established by the early eighteenth century. Croom is also representative of the economic and commercial heritage of Prince George's County with the establishment of several general stores that date from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century.

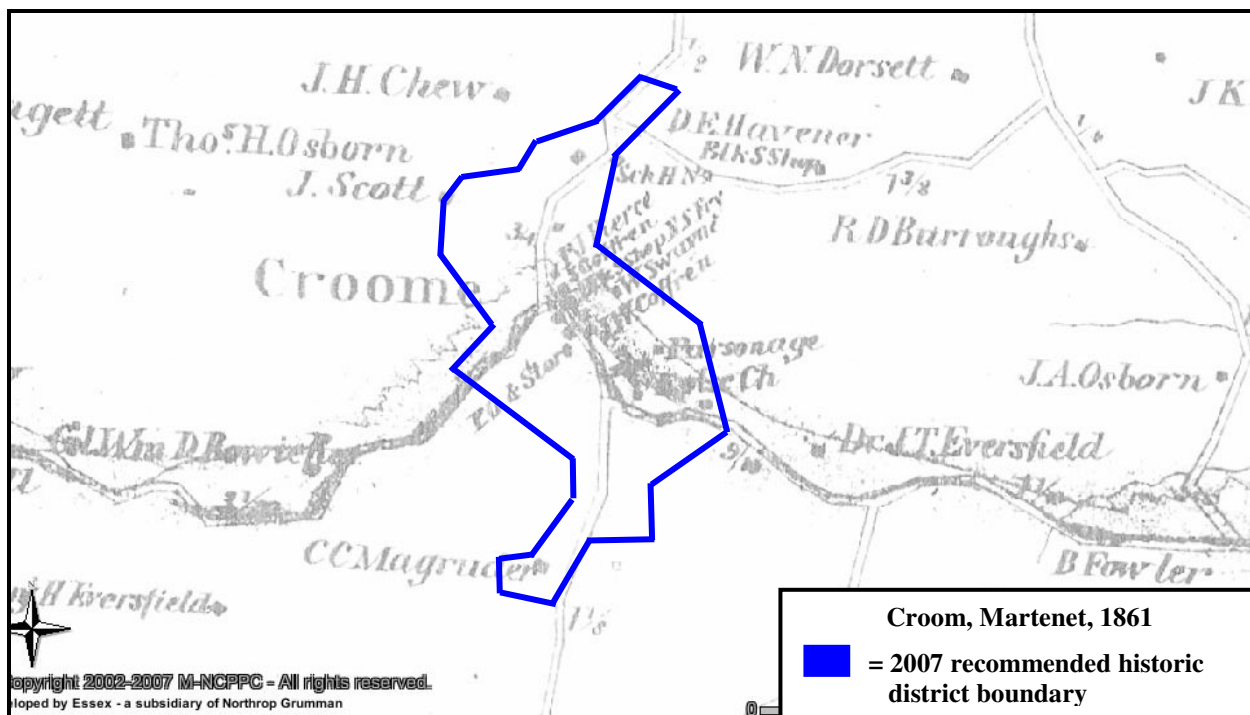
Criterion C – Croom is significant as one of the few communities that still retains its characteristics as a rural village, and whose architecture has remained largely intact. The variety of vernacular dwellings reflect the diversity of individuals who settled in the area. There has been very limited infill in the small village, and it still remains a cohesive rural village.

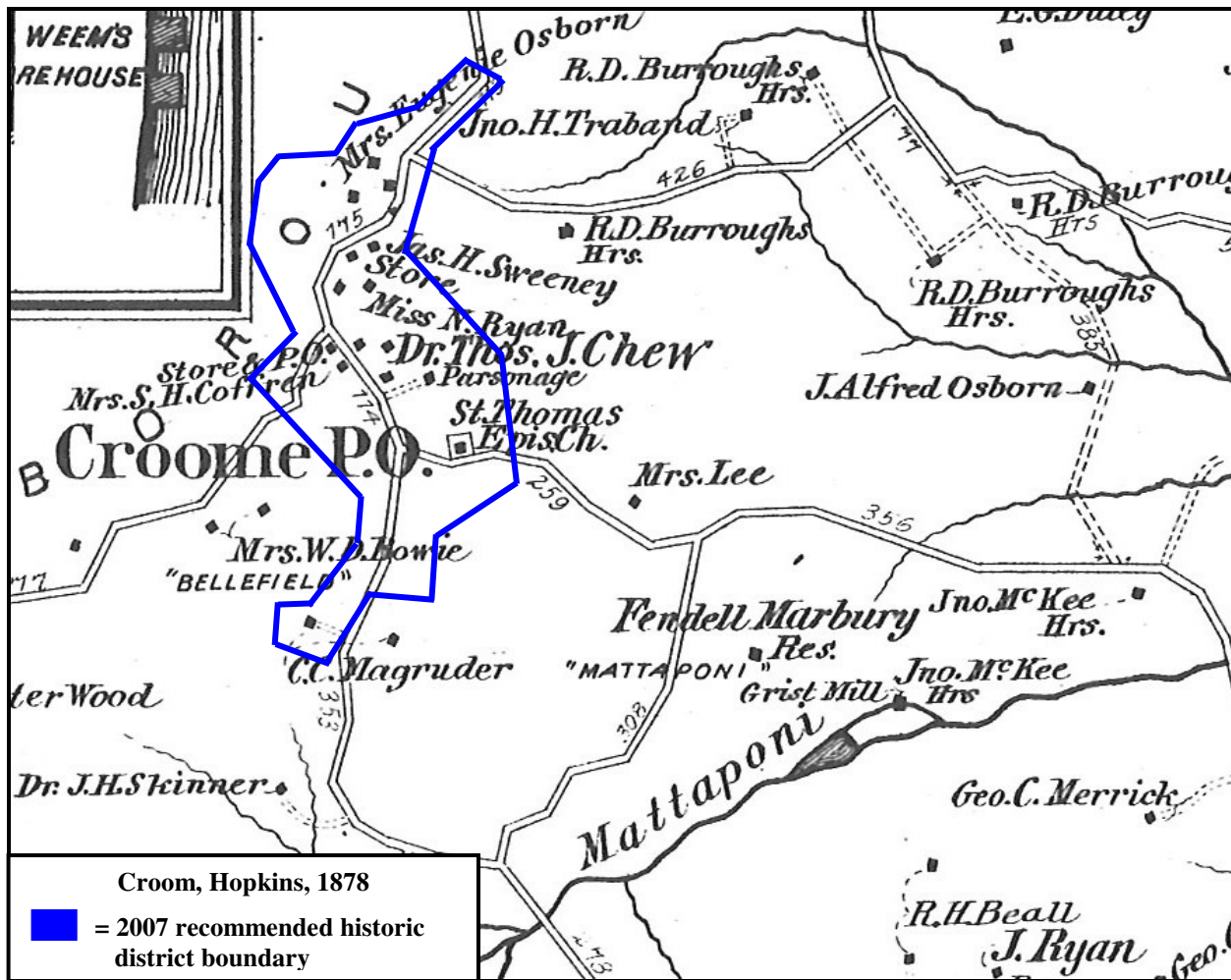
Criterion D – Because Croom Road was used as a trail by Native Americans, Croom has the potential to yield information about the Native Americans who lived and traveled through the area.

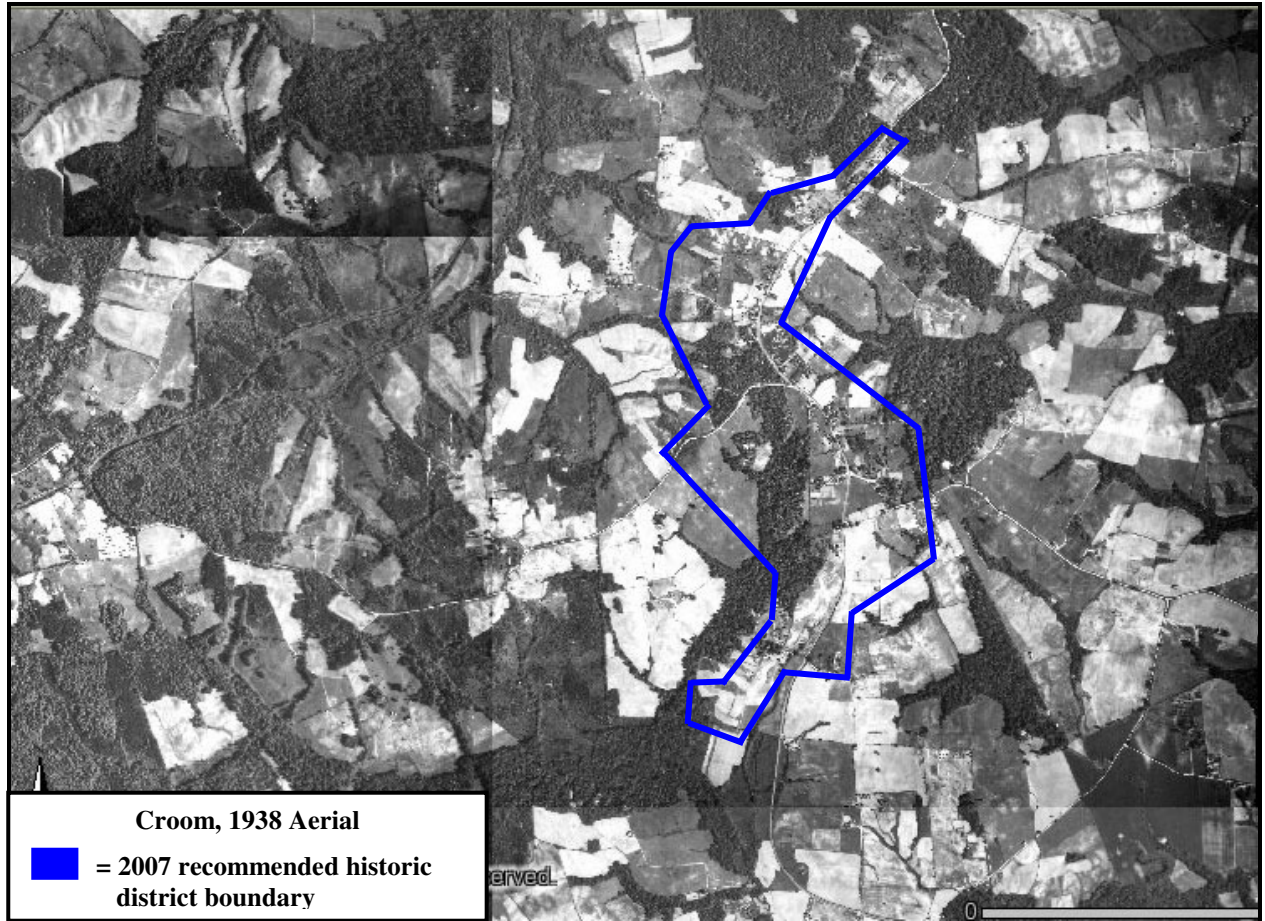
In addition to its historic significance, Croom has retained its integrity of design, location, setting, workmanship, materials, association, and feeling.

Prepared by EHT Tracerics, Inc.
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Looking east, St. Thomas Episcopal Church (PG: 86A-027-07) (NR), 14300 St. Thomas Church Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, Dr. William H. Gibbons House (PG: 86A-027-06), 10205 Croom Road
(*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northeast, 10508 Croom Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, 10401 Croom Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southwest, 10109 Croom Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northeast, 10104 Croom Road, Moore's Country Store (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southeast, 10104 Croom Road, Moore's Country Store (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, 9701 Croom Road, Country Corner Market (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking south, 9316 Croom Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, West End Farm (PG: 86A-005), 10709 Croom Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)