

B--CENTREVILLE HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Centreville Historic Overlay District was established in 1986 to protect the pre-Civil War structures in Centreville and their immediate environs.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- o The five identified historic structures of old Centreville retain much of their historic integrity and are clearly recognizable as historic structures by their materials and setting.
- o Except for Mount Gilead, which is of an earlier era, the other four historic structures are sited near and directly facing a road.
- o Braddock and Mount Gilead Roads are two-lane roads which retain their character as local-serving lanes within a small crossroads community.
- o The landscaping is natural and informal.
- o Much of the district is open space, comprised of vacant lots and rear yards.
- o Other structures located within the district are mostly small, 20th-century houses which, while not classified as contributing properties, serve as background.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Centreville traces its roots to the mid-18th-century community known as Newgate. In 1792 residents petitioned the Virginia Assembly to found a town, called Centreville, on Braddock's Road. Though the town was platted and city streets and house lots laid out, it never achieved the hoped-for prosperity. The building of the Warrenton Turnpike in 1806 helped revive business, but the construction in the 1850s of railroads nearby but bypassing Centreville contributed to its gradual decline.

Centreville achieved its most prominent position during the Civil War. Its strategic location near turnpikes and railroads and on a high plateau with a clear view for miles around prompted Confederate troops to occupy the small town by June of 1861 and, that winter, almost 40,000 troops camped there. They constructed over five miles of earthworks and severely despoiled the area by clearing every scrap of land of trees for construction lumber and firewood while their commanding general used Mount Gilead as his headquarters. After being abandoned by the Confederates, Union troops occupied the town in 1862.

Military photographs document the treeless landscape and long lines of trenches. Centreville never completely recovered from the devastation; even in 1914, one passerby remarked, "If ever a village was killed in war it was Centreville."

The remaining roads and structures of old Centreville are significant pieces of local history--a town founded with commercial hopes that never materialized, the site of massive occupation of strategic ground, and a survivor among the larger of the many isolated villages which once dotted Fairfax County.

CONTRIBUTING FEATURES OF THE DISTRICT

- o ARCHITECTURE: The five primary structures forming the core of the historic district include Mount Gilead (c. 1750; 5634 Mount Gilead Road, parcel number 54-4-001-9E) which is the sole 18th century survivor from Newgate. It is a one-and-a-half story, timber framed, clapboard covered, side gabled house with large exterior gable-end stone chimneys. The sloping roof covering porches on both long sides is typical of vernacular mid-18th century houses in Virginia. Though an unsympathetic side addition was constructed in the 1950s, the house remains relatively intact. Unlike nearby 19th century structures, Mount Gilead is set back from current roads, at the end of a magnolia lined drive, and reflects an earlier site design practice.

The Harrison (c.1840; 13930 Braddock Road, 54-4-001-41) and Havener Houses (pre-1861; 13940 Braddock Road, 54-4-001-43) were built in the early to mid-19th centuries and both are located along Braddock Road. They share the characteristics of clapboard siding, standing-seam metal gable roofs, two stories, stone foundations, side gables, front porches, and six-over-six sash windows.

St. John's Church and cemetery (1851; 5631 Wharton Lane, 54-4-001-25) is the focal point at the end of Mount Gilead Road and forms the most striking vista in the district. The front gable of the small, white painted, Gothic Revival church faces the road and is marked by a small vestibule, pointed-arch windows, and a sawn bargeboard in a dog tooth pattern.

The Old Stone Church (1870; 13941 Braddock Road, 54-4-001-44) was originally the home of the Centreville Methodist Church. It was built in 1870 by the congregation to replace their original church destroyed during the Civil War. Its gable end faces the road, with stone walls and clapboard in the gable. A matching wing was added to the northwest in 1945.

HISTORIC AND CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES: In the report substantiating the zoning amendment that established the Centreville Historic Overlay District, the five buildings described above are specifically listed as historic properties. No contributing properties are listed.

LANDSCAPE AND SITE FEATURES: Most of the landscaping within the district consists of open, informal growth along the roadside and fence lines. The St. John's property has substantial trees around the church and cemetery. One exception to the informal pattern is the magnolia row lining the driveway of Mount Gilead. Except for Mount Gilead, clear views exist to the pivotal structures. Three structures face Braddock Road while Mount Gilead Road offers a vista to the fourth--John's Church.

ARCHAEOLOGY: This area has several recorded archaeological sites and probably contains others yet unrecorded. Two recorded sites are the 175-grave St. John's cemetery (44 FX 1226); the site of the Mohler house, an 1830 house demolished in 1969 (44 FX 53) and the Mount Gilead site and Civil War earthworks and cemetery (44 FX 1097). As the site of a town for over two hundred years, the area has the potential to contain resources in the form of subsurface features (wells, foundations, privies, graves, etc.) and artifact scatters. Civil War-era graves may be located throughout the district.

DISTRICT GOAL

The goal of the historic district is to protect the historic and aesthetic integrity of the historic structures and to ensure that their surroundings contribute to this protection.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The following section presents standards which should be maintained and promoted in order to achieve the goal of the district. Specific guidelines suggest ways in which those standards may be maintained.

STANDARD 1--Street alignment and character should be preserved and enhanced.

GUIDELINES

- 1.1 Maintain Mount Gilead and Braddock Roads as two-lane, curving roads.
- 1.2 Blend new driveways and outlet roads with the material, scale, and design of existing roads.
- 1.3 Do not put curb and gutter on Mount Gilead Road.

STANDARD 2--Views and vistas to historic structures should be preserved and enhanced.

STANDARD 3--The physical and visual integrity of historic structures and their sites should be preserved and enhanced.

GUIDELINES

- 3.1 Follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for all preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic structures.
- 3.2 Consider the potential for archaeological resources early in development and construction plans and mitigate adverse effects.
- 3.3 Protect the integrity of the grave sites and markers in the St. John's Church cemetery.
- 3.4 Preserve any farm buildings or dependencies historically associated with the historic structures.

STANDARD 4--Natural landscape features --particularly traditional plant materials and tree cover--should be preserved and enhanced.

GUIDELINES

- 4.1 Preserve Mount Gilead's magnolia row.
- 4.2 Retain natural contours of the land.
- 4.3 Avoid removal of existing, healthy trees.
- 4.4 Maintain natural landscaping around historic structures.

STANDARD 5--Existing development patterns should be preserved.

GUIDELINES

- 5.1 The historic structures that face a road should continue to be oriented toward that road.
- 5.2 New development should be externally oriented, with a direct relationship to the roads and existing structures.
- 5.3 New development should respect the underlying town pattern of Centreville.

STANDARD 6--New construction should be visually compatible with existing historic structures.

GUIDELINES

SITE PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN

- 6.1 Avoid large expanses of parking areas by breaking them into smaller units.
- 6.2 Screen parking by incorporating it into a landscape design.
- 6.3 Consolidate site access into shared, well-defined entries.
- 6.4 Locate storage and service areas away from public view and from the pivotal structures. If that is not possible, screen them from view.

ARCHITECTURAL MASS AND SCALE

- 6.5 New structures or complexes of structures should not overwhelm the historic structures or compete for the visual focus of the district.
- 6.6 Compositions of smaller units instead of one large building are preferred.
- 6.7 Buildings should be of a human scale.
- 6.8 Building height should not exceed 35 feet.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND STYLE

- 6.9 Side elevations visible from the roadway should receive as much attention as the primary facade.
- 6.10 Avoid large expanses of blank walls.
- 6.11 Individual building elements, such as shutters, porches, windows, and entranceways, should be functional and integral parts of the overall design that do not appear pasted on to the structure.
- 6.12 Compatibility may be enhanced by echoing features of the historic buildings, such as gable roofs, regularly spaced openings, one-story porches, and simple entrances.

MATERIALS AND COLORS

- 6.12 Use only two or three materials in one structure or complex.
- 6.14 Keep color schemes simple.
- 6.15 Use medium- to low-intensity colors.

STANDARD 7—Signage should be compatible with the character of the district and not overwhelm the historic structures or roads.

GUIDELINES

- 7.1 Minimize size and number of signs.
- 7.2 In commercial/office developments with more than one business, all signs should be compatible.
- 7.3 Do not use internally lighted plastic signs.
- 7.4 Use simple designs.