E--HUNTLEY HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Huntley Historic Overlay District was established in 1976 to protect the 1820 houseknown as Huntley, its outbuildings, and environs including the views from the house to the south and from Harrison Lane to the house.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- The Huntley complex includes the house, which dominates its site, and a remarkable collection of outbuildings, most of which are painted white.

- Huntley is located on a hillside which slopes steeply to the south. The house was specifically built in this location to take advantage of the dramatic view across Hybla Valley toward the Potomac River.

- Huntley Meadows Park, though not in the district, provides 1200 acres of open space within the Huntley viewshed, protecting the crucial view from the house to the south

- Harrison Lane, a winding two-lane road adjacent to Huntley and lined with trees, traverses the district from north to south. Going north, toward Huntley, the road provides an axial view to the house.

- None of the other structures located within the district relate to the Huntley complex and, in fact, most are screened from its view.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Huntley was constructed ca. 1818 for Thomson Mason, a grandson of George Mason IV. Thomson Mason was a Fairfax County Justice of the Peace and Mayor of Alexandria. Even though it was built as a secondary home, Huntley is architecturally sophisticated. It is a Roman-revival villa which has been attributed to George Hadfield, Benjamin Latrobe, and other prominent Washington area architects. The entire site was designed as a whole, with symetrically arranged dependencies balancing the design and elaborate terracing climbing the sloping lot. The original 1000-acre property gradually was reduced over time until it reached its present size of appropximately three acres. The Huntley property contains a remarkable collection of buildings which are valuable both architecturally and as a relatively intact picture of local 19th-century plantation life. Huntley's architectural sophistication and its association with the Masons caused it to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. The Fairfax County Park Authority purchased Huntley in 1989.

CONTRIBUTING FEATURES OF THE DISTRICT

- ARCHITECTURE: Huntley is an H-shaped, tripartite house with low gables and built into the steep hillside. The center section of the house is a large square hall with the flanking wings forming the legs of the H-shaped plan. The doors into the center hall

are aligned, providing a view straight through the house and from the house to the Potomac River. The house is of brick and the the standing outbuildings include the necessary or privy, icehouse, root cellar, and tenant house--all are painted white. A springhouse was recently destroyed.

- HISTORIC AND CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES: In the report substantiating the zoning amendment that established the Huntley Historic Overlay District, only the Huntly complex itself (6918 Harrison Lane, parcel number 92-2-001-8C), including the house and all related outbuildings on the grounds, are listed as historic properties. A contributing property within the district is the house at 6917 Harrison Lane (92-2-001-10A).

- LANDSCAPE AND SITE FEATURES: The topography and landscape are crucial features of the district. This site was chosen for Huntley because of its view, created by the dramatic slope. Near Huntley, the Huntley Methodist Church and Polins Court subdivision intrude on the immediate view, but middle-distance development is screened by trees and the distant viewshed is protected by Huntley Meadows Park. If the view was to be compromised further, the district would lose a crucial characteristic. The Huntley property and the property immediately to the north have few trees, except for a poorly maintained stand along the fence line between the two. Another stand of trees to the west screens the Stoneybrooke subdivision. Evidence of terracing on the hillside below Huntley exists and the reintroduction of formal landscaping would be in keeping with the high-style architectural elements of the complex's architecture. The northeast corner of the district is a wooded park. Some small wooded areas line Harrison Lane and screen townhouses in the southwest section of the district.

- ARCHAEOLOGY: The Huntley property is rich with archaeological potential and, in fact, part of the stated reason for the establishment of the district was to preserve the site for future archaeological research. The site contains remains of other plantation buildings, assorted artifact scatters, and clues to the historic landscape of terraces and gardens.

GOAL FOR THE DISTRICT

The goal of the historic district is the preservation of Huntley, its outbuildings, and the archaeological integrity of its site. The district also seeks to promote compatible residential land uses and retention of as much tree cover as possible.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

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

STANDARD 1--Natural and man-made topographic features of the district should be preserved and enhanced.

GUIDELINES

1.1 Retain natural and man-made land contours.

1.2 Protect and enhance views to and from Huntley.

STANDARD 2--Conserve and enhance existing tree cover and landscaping in order to screen incompatible existing and proposed development from view and to provide a visual frame for the Huntley complex.

GUIDELINES

2.1 Avoid removal of existing healthy trees. Replace diseased or damaged trees with like material.

2.2 Provide a buffer of trees along Harrison Lane across from Huntley and for at least 800 feet south.

2.3 Maintain and enhance buffers between Huntley and the Stoneybrooke subdivision and the Woodstone townhouses.

2.4 Provide extensive tree cover immediately north of the Huntley property.

STANDARD 3--Preserve Harrison Lane's alignment and character.

GUIDELINES

3.1 Do not widen Harrison Lane from its current two-lane design.

3.2 Avoid impinging on the Huntley property in any road work.

3.3 Preserve the view north to Huntley from Harrison Lane.

3.4 Maintain the blacktop trail on west side of Harrison Lane.

STANDARD 4--Protect the integrity of the historic structures and their site.

GUIDELINES

4.1 Follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for all preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of the Huntly complex.

4.2 Consider the potential for archaeological resources early in development plans and mitigate adverse effects.

4.3 Preserve the historic landscape as much as possible. Base recreations of the historic landscape on material or documentary evidence.

4.4 Limit the amount of parking provided on the site and consider sharing existing parking with the adjacent Huntley Methodist Church.

STANDARD 5--The site design of new residential construction should not detract from or compete with Huntley.

GUIDELINES

5.1 As the crucial backdrop to Huntley, the parcel north and west of Huntley would optimally remain open space and be replanted with trees.

5.2 Structures should be set back from Harrison Lane behind a landscape buffer, particularly apartments and townhouses.

5.3 No rear elevations should be visible from the public roadway or Huntley.

5.4 Structures should fit into the landscape rather than dominate it.

5.5 Limit the number and width of driveways onto Harrison Lane.

5.6 All parking areas should be screened and unobtrusive.

5.7 No solid walls or fences should line Harrison Lane.

STANDARD 6--The design of new construction should be compatible with Huntley.

GUIDELINES

6.1 Keep massing and roof forms simple.

6.2 Use muted colors. Do not use white if the structure is within the line of sight either to or from Huntley.

6.3 Dominant vertical elements should be discouraged.

6.4 The mass and scale of structures within Huntley's view should not appear substantially larger than the mass and scale of Huntley.

6.5 Building height shall not exceed 35'.

6.6 Free-standing signs may not exceed 5 feet in height.