G--LANGLEY FORK HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Langley Fork Historic Overlay District was established in 1980 to protect the special character of this crossroads. Also in 1980, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- The topography is gently rolling.
- Georgetown Pike and Chain Bridge Road retain a rural character.
- The landscape is dense, natural, and informal. Extensive tree cover shades the roads and both frames and screens buildings.
- The settlement pattern is characterized by detached buildings set near the center of large lots, except for buildings with a historically public function, which are sited near the road. Buildings line Georgetown Pike and Chain Bridge Road, forming a single layer of buildings with a backdrop of green.
- The historic buildings have a unity of architectural scale and expression.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Beginning in the early 19th century, the village of Langley grew around the juncture of the Georgetown-Leesburg Turnpike and Chain Bridge Road. Both roads date from the colonial era. The Georgetown-Leesburg Turnpike was an important east-west road linking farmers with the merchants of Georgetown. Fairfax County had few towns and clusters of houses and other buildings developed around crossroads, near mills, or at other convenient locations. These settlements dotted the rural 19th- and 20th-century landscape. Langley Fork is the most intact and recognizable of these rural crossroads villages remaining in Fairfax County. Six buildings, in addition to the roads themselves, remain from the previous century. Two, the mid-19th-Century ordinary and toll house, illustrate the area's importance as a stopping point for travelers. The ordinary served as both headquarters and hospital for troops in the Civil War. The Mackall House was built in 1858 as Trinity Methodist Church, but was later converted into a house and is now a school. Two other churches survive, the Langley Friends Meeting House, built in 1893 as the second church of the Trinity Methodist congregation, and Gunnell's Chapel, built after 1865 as the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. The sixth structure, Hickory Hill, was constructed shortly after the Civil War, probably by the same man who built the ordinary. In the 1930s the house was extensively remodeled.

CONTRIBUTING FEATURES OF THE DISTRICT

- ARCHITECTURE: The architecture of the historic and contributing structures of the district is characterized by detached buildings of simple, predominantly horizontal design at a human scale. The larger and more complex the structure, the more open space it has around it. The massing is simple, with few projecting elements. The buildings are either clapboard-covered

frame or painted brick. White and warm creams are the dominant colors. The structures are between one and two-and-a-half stories in height and all of the buildings have simple gable roofs. The historic public buildings sited near the road have front gables, while private residences sited farther back are side-gabled. Windows are regularly spaced, rectangular, divided sash. Entrances are centered in the front elevation and face the road. All architectural embellishment is restrained and limited to unique features of specific buildings, for example the cornice brackets of the Mackall House. The Langley Friends Meeting House has several unique features, lancet windows, modified buttresses, and a bell tower, all features suitable to ecclesiastical architecture.

The architectural characteristics of the Georgetown Pike and Chain Bridge Road sections of the district, while still in harmony, vary slightly. On Chain Bridge Road, three houses, Hickory Hill and two compatible houses from the 1950s, form a trio of similar, side-gabled, brick houses. On Georgetown Pike, wood siding dominates and the buildings are smaller.

o HISTORIC AND CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES: In the report substantiating the zoning amendment that established the Langley Fork Historic Overlay District, six properties are listed as historic. These include the Langley Toll House and Gunnel's Chapel (6324 Georgetown Pike, parcel number 22-3-001-43), the Langley Ordinary (1101 Chain Bridge Road, 22-3-001-63), the Langley Friends Meeting House (6410 Georgetown Pike, 22-3-001-48), the Mackall House (6418 Georgetown Pike, 22-3-001-49), and Hickory Hill (1147 Chain Bridge Road). The Scoville property (6400 Georgetown Pike, 22-3-001-47) is considered as contributing.

o LANDSCAPE AND SITE FEATURES: Landscape is a crucial, defining feature of the historic district. Mature deciduous trees, planted at irregular intervals, form a canopy over the roads. The tree cover is more extensive in the district than in the areas adjacent to the approaches to it, which helps to distinguish the district from its surroundings. Along the sides of Georgetown Pike dense, natural growth of shrubs and trees creates a verdant corridor. Along Chain Bridge Road the landscaping is more tame, but equally dense. Open, horizontal board fences contribute to the rural quality of the area. The landscaping and fences form soft edges along the roads and between properties. Along the north side of Georgetown Pike is a paved blacktop trail with simple horizontal pipe railing.

On the eastern end of the district is considerable open space, wooded to the north, open to the south, which provides a buffer between the district and more intense development further east.

o ARCHAEOLOGY: No known archaeological features exist in the historic district. However, as the site of a 19th-century village of approximately thirty structures and a crossroads dating to the 18th-century, the area has the potential to

contain archaeological resources in the form of subsurface features (wells, privies, graves, etc.) and artifact scatters.

DISTRICT GOAL

The goal of the historic district is to preserve the historical and visual character and integrity of the area while accomodating change. The primary means of protecting this integrity are preventing inappropriate road improvements and ensuring that all new construction is compatible in use and scale with the existing character of the district.

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 then suggest ways in which those standards may be maintained.

STANDARD 1--Preserve road alignment and character.

GUIDELINES

1.1 Maintain Georgetown Pike and Chain Bridge Road as two-lane curving roads without curb and gutter.

1.2 Blend new driveways and outlet roads with the material, scale, and design of Georgetown Pike and Chain Bridge Road.

1.3 Maintain the paved blacktop trail adjacent to Georgetown Pike in its current state.

1.4 All parking areas should be screened and unobtrusive.

STANDARD 2--Preserve the existing settlement pattern.

GUIDELINES

2.1 New construction should be in the form of detached structures set back from the road, facing it if along the road.

2.2 New construction should be in scale with the surrounding space. For instance, a structure should not have a front elevation wider than one-third of its lot.

STANDARD 3--Maintain natural features.

GUIDELINES

3.1 Avoid removal of existing, healthy trees. Replace diseased trees with like material.

3.2 Maintain natural land contours.

3.3 Deciduous trees, which provide canopy, are preferred to evergreens.

3.4 Encourage informal, natural landscaping, particularly along roads.

3.5 Preserve open space at the eastern entrance to the district.

STANDARD 4--Protect the integrity of the historic structures.

4.1 Follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards for all preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic and contributing structures.

4.2 Maintain a visual focus on the historic structures.

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

STANDARD 5--New construction should be compatible with the existing historic buildings, without reproducing a false historicism.

5.1 Dominant vertical elements or verticality shall be discouraged.

5.2 Keep massing simple.

5.3 Houses should be one or two stories.

5.4 Compatibility may be enhanced by echoing features of historic buildings located within the district, such as gable roofs, rectangular windows, light colors, one-story porches, and simple entrances.

5.5 Avoid using a variety of window sizes and forms on a single structure.

5.6 Building elements (such as shutters, brackets, porches) should be functional.

5.7 Skylights should be flat and not visible from a public walkway or road.

5.8 Each structure should use only one primary siding material.

5.9 If wood is used, it should be horizontal siding. (Vertical siding may be used for subsidiary structures.)

5.10 If brick is used, its color and texture should be similar to that found within the district, such as that used on the Chain Bridge Road brick structures.

5.11 Building height shall not exceed 35'.

STANDARD 6--Subsidiary, service, and mechanical structures should be compatible with the existing character of the district and not overwhelm the historic structures or landscape.

GUIDELINES

6.1 Subsidiary buildings, such as garages, should be small, background buildings compatible with the material, scale, and detailing of the main building on the property.

6.2 All fences should be open, horizontal board fences. Entrance gates and posts should be simple and light in color.

6.3 Signage shall be discrete, at a residential scale, and not internally lighted.

6.4 Exterior light fixtures should be simple and located either on the structure (such as house or gate post) or low on the ground. Avoid free-standing light posts, an urban feature.