

D--DRANESVILLE TAVERN HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Dranesville Tavern Historic Overlay District was established in 1972 to protect the ca. 1820 tavern and to retain the remaining low-density, rural character of the area.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- o The topography is gently rolling, sloping to the west and rising behind the tavern.
- o Open space, mostly fields, dominates the core of the district and its approaches.
- o Leesburg Pike (Route 7), a four-lane highway, bisects the district.
- o The tavern is an isolated structure clearly visible from Route 7 with a thin backdrop of woods.
- o The tavern is a vernacular frame and log building of residential scale.
- o Most of the surrounding development is single family houses sited at least 500 feet from the tavern and without direct access to Route 7.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Dranesville Tavern is one of the few remaining examples of the rural Virginia inn or ordinary which served the traveling public of the 18th and 19th centuries. In the early 1800s, rivalry between Alexandria and Georgetown merchants for western trade led to the construction of two turnpikes, the Georgetown-Leesburg Turnpike and the Alexandria-Leesburg Turnpike (also called Middle Turnpike), which met here and continued to the Shenandoah and Potomac River Valleys. Dranesville was a convenient overnight stopping point and had as many as five taverns. Incorporated in 1840, the linear town of Dranesville stretched from the intersection of the turnpikes almost to the Loudoun/Fairfax County line.

By the 1970s, little of the town of Dranesville remained. In the late 19th century the railroad drew commerce and traffic away from the turnpike and supporting businesses and, in this century, subdivisions replaced farms. The Dranesville Tavern, though, continued as a hotel and later a boarding house. The widening of Route 7 in 1968 threatened its demolition, but due to public outcry it was purchased by the Fairfax County Park Authority which relocated the tavern back from the expanded right-of-way, maintaining the structure's historic orientation to the road. Few other structures from Dranesville's past as a town have survived. The Dranesville Tavern was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

CONTRIBUTING FEATURES OF THE DISTRICT

- o **ARCHITECTURE:** The tavern is a long, two-story, clapboard-covered, log and frame structure with a gable roof and sandstone

foundation. Large sandstone chimneys dominate the narrow end elevations. It was restored by the Fairfax County Park Authority in 1978.

- o North of the tavern, set back and screened from view, is Holly Knoll, built in 1858 by Frederick Carper, one of the original trustees of the Town of Dranesville. Other than the tavern, it is the only structure within the historic district associated with pre-Civil War Dranesville. It is a brick, two-story, side-gabled, five-bay house. The Holly Knoll property is marked by a white board fence and brick posts at the driveway.
- o The Hammond house, dates from the late 19th century. It is a simple two-story, side-gabled, frame farmhouse substantially unchanged from the early 20th century. It and the early 20th century McDannald house and outbuildings are the only other buildings in the area which recall the former rural character of the district.
- o HISTORIC AND CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES: In the report substantiating the zoning amendment that established the Dranesville Tavern Historic Overlay District, only the tavern itself (11919 Leesburg Pike, parcel number 6-3-001-19) is specifically listed as a historic property. Contributing properties include Holly Knoll (12000 Leesburg Pike, 6-3-001-6), the McDannald House (11903 Leesburg Pike, 6-3-001-31A) and related barns and outbuildings (11823 Leesburg Pike, 6-3-001-31B), and the Hammond House (12021 Leesburg Pike, 6-3-001-15).

LANDSCAPE AND SITE FEATURES: The tavern property is informally landscaped open space. The visitors parking lot west of the tavern is recessed and lined with trees. The berms on the tavern property and the low siting of Route 7 cause, from the tavern, the illusion that the open grassy area continues across the roadbed without being interrupted by the highway. Behind and besides the tavern on the west are a thin backdrop of woods which frame the tavern. The land behind the tavern dips down to a stream, then rises to an elevation about forty feet above the tavern. The lots beside the tavern along Route 7 are also mostly open with informal landscaping.

Across from the tavern, the northern side of Route 7 is composed entirely of fields and wooded lots which extend between 400 to 800 feet from the highway. They provide a crucial green foreground for the tavern and its approaches. Particularly important is the field in front of Holly Knoll directly across from the tavern.

Route 7 cuts a straight, wide swath through the district and being recessed rather than at-grade or elevated helps to reduce its visual impact on the district. Only two roads have a cut through the fifty foot median, Holly Knoll Drive and Rolling Holly Drive, both at the edges of the district. This keeps the green buffer along Route 7 immediately adjacent to and across

from the tavern intact. Multiple cross streets would not be in character with the desired low-density character.

ARCHAEOLOGY: When the tavern was moved, extensive archaeological investigations were done of the site. Holly Knoll and the Hammond house may have archaeological deposits such as subsurface features and artifact scatters associated with them.

GOAL FOR THE DISTRICT

The goal of the Dranesville Tavern Historic Overlay District is to protect the tavern, a unique historic resource with statewide significance, and to preserve and enhance the low-density, semi-rural character of its setting.

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 to implement those standards.

STANDARD 1--Natural topographic characteristics and landscape features--particularly traditional plant materials and tree cover--should be preserved and enhanced.

GUIDELINES

- 1.1 Retain natural land contours.
- 1.2 Preserve existing vegetation and tree cover, particularly behind and around the tavern site.

STANDARD 2--The view of the tavern from primary approaches on Route 7 should be preserved and enhanced.

GUIDELINES

- 2.2 Do not screen tavern with vegetation or fencing.
- 2.3 Encourage retention of open space along Route 7 to provide an open and semi-rural vista to the tavern. Begin development no closer than 300 feet from the road.
- 2.4 Screen new development with natural landscaping to focus attention on the tavern.

STANDARD 3--Avoid introducing numerous or excessively wide entrances on Route 7 that would produce visual confusion, reduce landscaping, and increase paved surfaces.

GUIDELINES

- 3.1 Minimize the number and width of entrances onto Route 7.
- 3.2 Provide site access from other existing roads whenever possible.

- 3.3 The only additional cut through the median of Route 7 should be for the tavern site so that it is accessible to both east and westbound travelers.

STANDARD 4--New construction should not detract from or overwhelm the tavern and the open space around it.

GUIDELINES

- 4.1 Provide landscape buffering between new construction and the tavern site.
- 4.2 Keep massing simple.
- 4.3 Building elements should be at a residential and human scale.
- 4.4 Rear elevations should not be visible from the tavern or Route 7.
- 4.5 Do not use bright colors.
- 4.6 Keep roof forms simple and use low to medium roof pitches.
- 4.7 Building height should not exceed 35'.

STANDARD 5--Signs and fences should not detract from or overwhelm the tavern.

GUIDELINES

- 5.1 Signs should be simple, low, in neutral colors, and no wider than six feet. Painted wood is preferred.
- 5.2 Do not use internally lighted signs. Lighting should be provided by simple fixtures mounted on the sign or on the ground near the sign.
- 5.3 All fences should be open, horizontal board or rail fences. Entrance gates should be simple posts.
- 5.4 Tall privacy fences should be discouraged.

STANDARD 6--Protect the integrity of the historic structures.

GUIDELINES

- 6.1 Preserve Holly Knoll in place.
- 6.2 Follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for all preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of Dranesville Tavern, Holly Knoll, and other contributive structures.
- 6.3 Preserve outbuildings over fifty years old associated with the tavern, Holly Knoll, and other contributive structures when possible.
- 6.4 Consider the potential for archaeological resources early in development and construction plans and mitigate adverse effects.