

EAST TOWSON

DESIGN STANDARDS

October 2003

EAST TOWSON

DESIGN STANDARDS

1.0 INTENT

The East Towson Community Conservation Area was identified in the *Towson Community Plan*, adopted by Baltimore County Council on February 3, 1992, for preservation and revitalization as an historic African American community. The plan calls for design standards to ensure that any new development is compatible with the historic, residential character of the neighborhood, including infill development on vacant lots and redevelopment or renovation of existing properties. In addition, the standards are to include buffering and streetscape treatments along the properties and roads that border East Towson to protect and enhance the community's visual quality and livability. The streetscape environment is to be pedestrian-oriented, and provide access to the Towson town center and the neighboring community of Towson Manor Village.

2.0 APPLICABILITY

The application of the following standards will vary depending on the intensity of the development project. The standards do not preclude the applicability of other development or zoning regulations or guidelines.

2.1 Partial Compliance--Only that part of the site or building which is impacted by new construction must comply to the applicable standard(s) of this section:

- (a) Construction of accessory buildings.
- (b) Additions to existing buildings (less than 500 square feet).



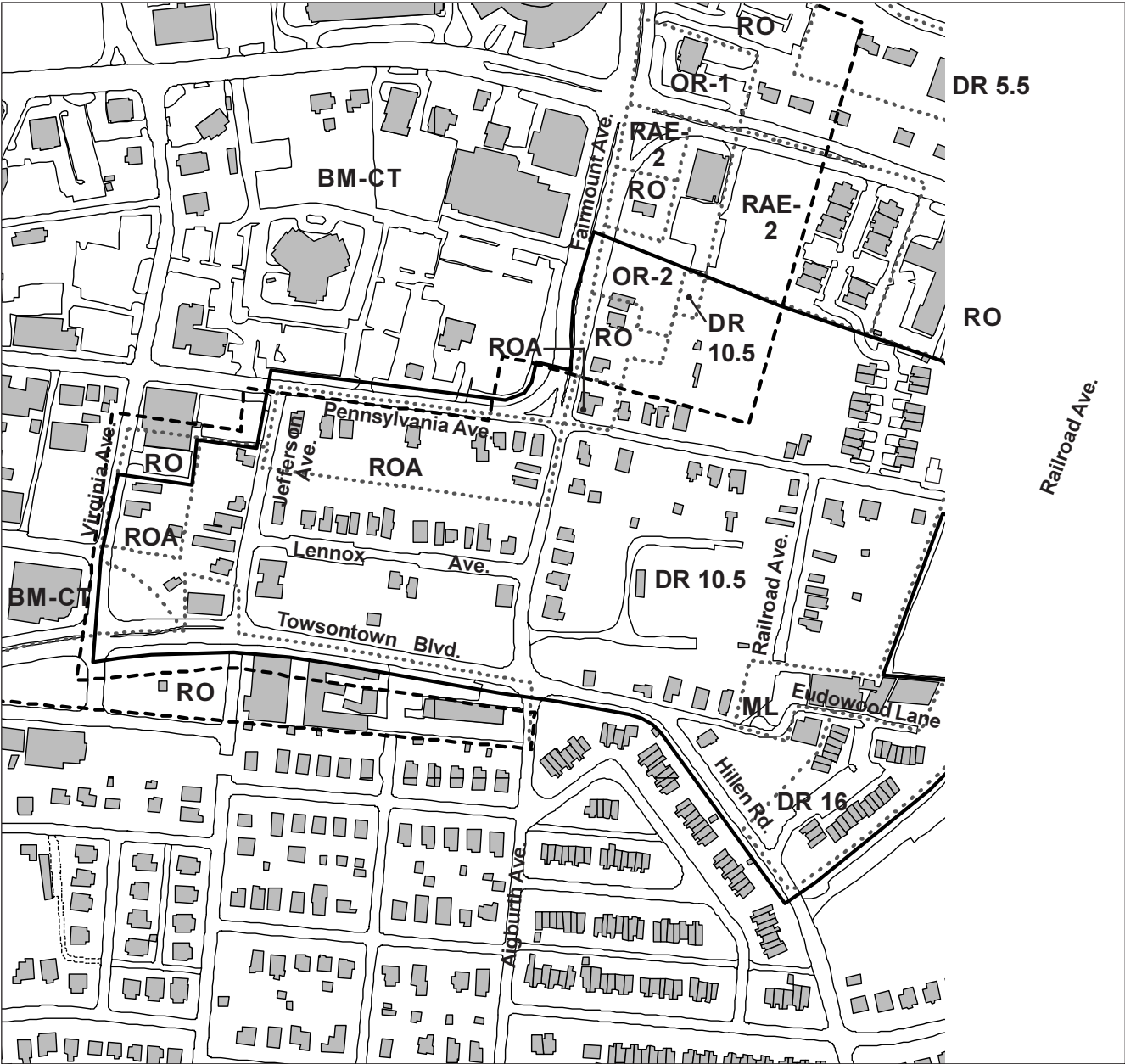
(Only the work being performed on the actual addition must comply with the standards. Any addition less than 500 square feet does not trigger compliance of any other part of the site.)

- (c) Change to exterior building facades, including material of roofing, siding, trim, windows, or porches.
- (d) New, replacement, or modification of signs, including change of message, for those properties with RO or ROA zoning classifications.
- (e) Other site elements such as lighting, fencing, landscaping, etc.

2.2 Full Compliance--Compliance to all standards of this section is required in the following circumstances:

- (a) Construction of a new principal structure.
- (b) Building renovations to an office use or affecting more than 50% of the gross floor area of the principal building. (This applies only to work that would require a building permit.)

BOUNDARY MAP
East Towson Area



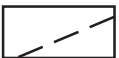
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East Towson
Design Standards
Boundary



Zoning
Boundary and
Designation



Design Review
Panel Boundary

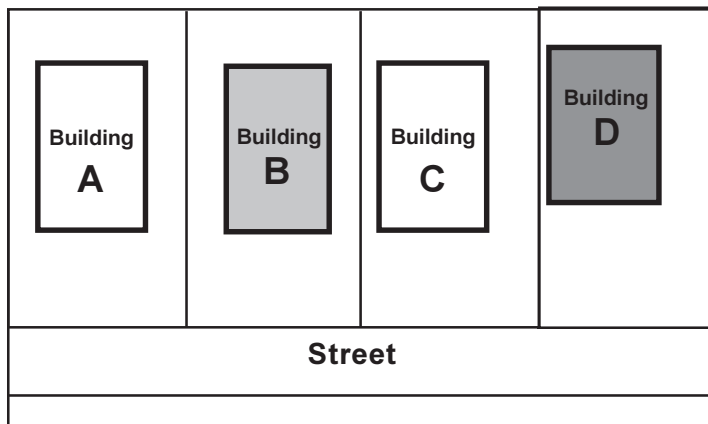
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- (c) Additions of more than 200 square feet in gross floor area. (Any addition in excess of 200 square feet triggers compliance of the entire site.)
 - (d) Any development requiring a variance.
- 2.3 A permit will not be issued for improvements in the East Towson Area unless the director of the Office of Planning finds that applicable plans and applications comply with these design standards.
- 2.4 For sites that have a Maryland Historical Trust inventory number, the owner/builder should shall follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, see Appendix B.
- 2.5 The finding of compliance or noncompliance by the director of the Office of Planning will be forwarded to the director of Permits and Development Management for issuance of approval if the application complies with all other aspects of county regulations.
- (b) Landscape plans and plant material specifications for all proposed landscaping.
 - (c) Elevations and material specifications of signage for all proposed signs.
 - (d) Elevations and material specifications for all proposed light fixtures, fences, and site furniture.
- (See Appendix C for programs available programs to assist with financial aid.)

3.0 SUBMITTALS

- 3.1 The Office of Planning will require additional submittals for developments which are required to comply with this section, including, but not limited to:
- (a) Elevation drawings and specifications of architectural finish materials for all proposed buildings or additions.



The placement of buildings on the street creates a three dimensional pattern or rhythm.



In the example above, Building B matches the front and side setbacks of A or C. Building D does not match any of the front or side setbacks of other buildings on this street.



A mix of housing shapes and side setbacks on Lennox Avenue produces a varied building rhythm.

4.0 SITE DESIGN

4.1 Performance Standard: Locate buildings and parking on the site in a manner which maintains the scale and character of the neighborhood.

- (a) As appropriate, match, mirror, or average the front and side setbacks with the adjacent buildings on the street so that the existing building rhythm is maintained. Setback variances may be required.
- (b) Locate all accessory buildings including garages and sheds at the rear of the property.
- (c) For residential office buildings, provide off-street parking only in the rear yard, and provide shared access between adjoining parking lots when feasible.

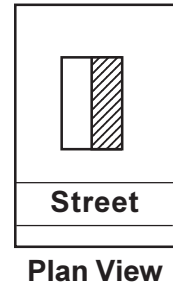
5.0 ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS

5.1 Performance Standard: Design structures that are consistent with the neighborhood in height, mass, and form.

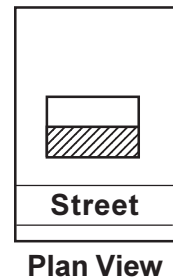
- (a) Structures shall be a maximum of 2-1/2 stories, and of a height typical to other similar structures within the neighborhood.
- (b) Facades shall have a vertical composition expressed through vertical massing oriented to the street, vertical window proportions, and/or gabled dormers.

5.2 Performance Standard: Incorporate Victorian vernacular design features and detailing which contribute to visual compatibility and attractiveness, and that are historically appropriate.

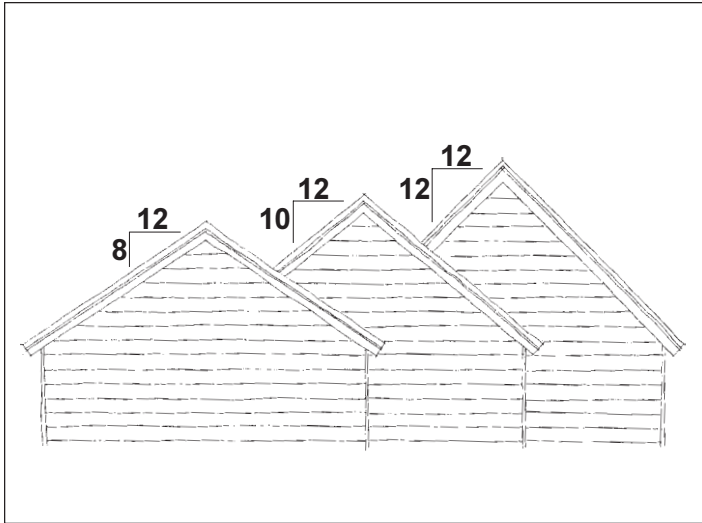
- (a) All residential and residential office structures shall have front porches with railings. All porch balusters are to be aligned vertically. Porch railings, balusters, and posts shall be painted with a trim color. Porches should be a minimum width/depth of six feet of useable space to create functionality.
- (b) Design new rear porches with historically accurate detailing similar to the front porch, rather than that of modern decks.
- (c) For structures that are included on the Maryland Historical Trust List, the owner/builder should refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, see Appendix B.



The Victorian vernacular style of East Towson is typically rectangular in plan, with vertical windows. The verticality of the front facade is reinforced by orienting the building with the gable end of the roof facing the street.



Some houses have the long side of the building rectangle oriented to the street, with the gable end of the roof facing the side. In the example above, the vertical composition is expressed through the narrow windows, steep roof pitch, and gabled dormer.



Steep roof pitches are also typical in the houses of East Towson.



Porches are common in East Towson.

- (d) The principal roof shall be gabled with a pitch between 8/12 and 12/12. The pitches of all roof planes occurring on the same site shall be equal or complementary.
- (e) Where the fire code requires additional stairs to upper floors, they shall be enclosed and designed as part of the principal structure.
- (f) Employ at least two of the following details for all principal structures:
 - (1) Wrap-around porch or a smaller porch that extends from the front facade.
 - (2) Attic windows, and/or other small ornamental windows.
 - (3) Gabled dormers, with or without windows.
 - (4) For porches, mouldings, railings, and/or turned posts.



Attic and dormer windows are frequently rounded at the top.

5.3 Performance Standard: Finish the exteriors of buildings with materials that are consistent with the neighborhood.

- (a) **Facade Materials:** Painted cedar siding or vinyl siding using a three-color scheme to treat the facade (including siding, trim, doors, etc.) is preferable. Stained cedar shakes are also acceptable. Use the same facade material for all sides of the building and any accessory buildings. Guidance is available at most home improvement stores.
- (b) **Roof Materials:** Stained cedar or asphalt shingles in black, gray, light brown, or light green to complement the building color. Use the same roofing material and color for the principal building and any accessory buildings.
- (c) **Accent colors for trim and other decorative elements** should be compatible with the facade and roof color. Use no more than two colors for all trim. Examples of (historic) colors that will complement each other for siding and trim can be found at a local home improvement center.



A renovated residential office reflects the character of the neighborhood.



This multifamily construction in East Towson used gables on the front facade, front porches which wrap around the building at the corners, and compatible materials and colors to blend in with the historic architecture.



Details such as mouldings add to the historic character.



Re-siding the entire house helps the facade of the rear addition blend in smoothly with the original structure.

5.4 Performance Standard: Create a unified architectural theme for all buildings and additions on the site consistent with the historic character of the neighborhood.

- (a) Treat all exterior building facades the same with respect to materials, composition, proportions, roof pitches, and detailing.
- (b) Additions and accessory structures shall be consistent with the architectural design of the principal structure. If an existing principal structure does not conform with these architectural standards, consider adding or changing elements of the detailing of both the principal structure and the proposed structure to make the entire site more consistent with the historic theme.

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- (c) When appropriate, use building wall offsets between the existing building and an addition to minimize the visual impact of slight variations in the color or patterning of the exterior finish material.

5.5 Performance Standard: Design institutional structures to be consistent with the neighborhood in scale/massing.

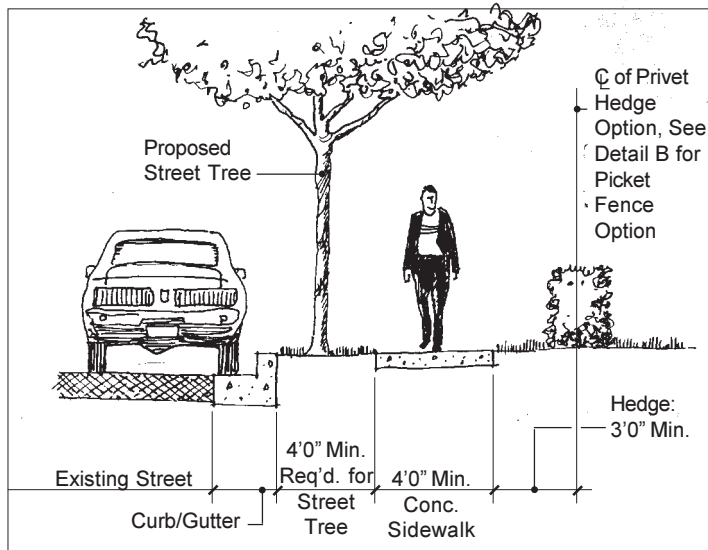
- (a) Employ materials, facade composition, and detailing, that are similar to those existing in the neighborhood.



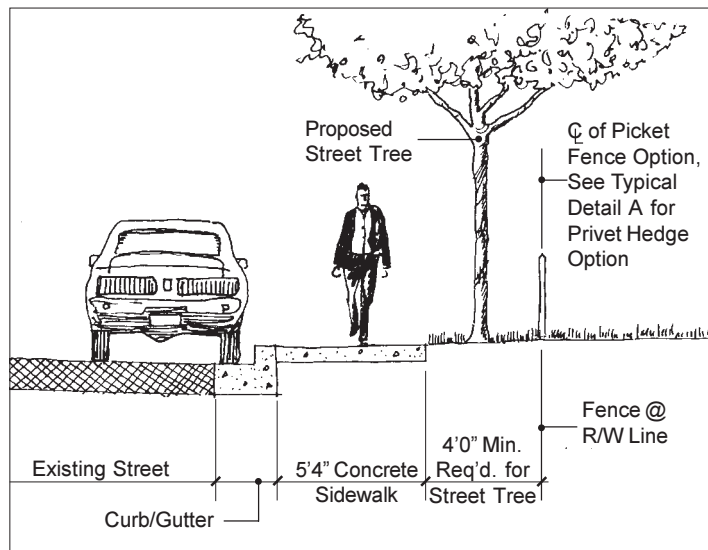
Using wall and roof offsets provide an effective method of minimizing color and material differences and provide a complementing transition between the old and new.



Institutional structures should also reflect the vertical proportions of Victorian architecture.



TYPICAL DETAIL A --
Sidewalk with Tree Lawn Adjacent to Curb



TYPICAL DETAIL B --
Sidewalk Adjacent to Curb

6.0 STREETSCAPE TREATMENTS

6.1 Performance Standard: Provide streetscape treatments that include sidewalks and street trees on all public roads to facilitate pedestrian circulation.

- (a) Construct sidewalks and install street trees in accordance with Typical Details A and/or B depending on location (see Streetscape Table on page 12). Variations may be necessary due to individual site conditions; however, the intent is to provide a landscaped pedestrian way. The dedication of additional right-of-way or an access easement may be required to accommodate sidewalks. In general, provide continuity in streetscape design along each street; however, where transitions between properties with different sidewalk treatments are necessary, they shall be made as smoothly as possible. All sidewalks shall meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- (b) Provide direct pedestrian access to building entrances from the street.

STREETSCAPE DESIGN TABLE

STREET	BLOCK	STREETSCAPE TYPE	STREET TREE TYPE AND SPACING
VIRGINIA AVE.	East side, within East Towson boundary	Match existing	'Green Vase' Zelkova (Zelkova serrata 'Green Vase') @ 40' apart
JEFFERSON AVE.		Type B	Red Oak (Quercus borealis) @ 40' apart
PENNSYLVANIA AVE.	Jefferson Ave. to Fairmount Ave.	Type A	N/S: Sunset Red Maple (Acer rubrum 'Red Sunset') @ 40' apart; S/S: Hedge Maple (Acer campestre)* at 30' apart
PENNSYLVANIA AVE.	Fairmount Ave. to end at Railroad Ave.	Type B	Hedge Maple (Acer campestre)* @ 30' apart
TOWSONTOWN BLVD.	Virginia Ave. to Jefferson Ave.	Match existing	'Green Vase' Zelkova (Zelkova serrata 'Green Vase') @ 40' apart
HILLEN ROAD	Fairmount Ave. to Eudowood Ave.	Type B	N/S: 'Green Vase' Zelkova (Zelkova serrata 'Green Vase') @ 40' apart S/S: Screen rear properties with Leyland Cypress (Cupressocyparis Leylandi) @ 10' apart
HILLEN ROAD	Eudowood Ave. to area boundary	East Side: Type A West Side: Type B	E/S: 'Green Vase' Zelkova (Zelkova serrata 'Green Vase') @ 40' apart. W/S: Screen rear properties with Leyland Cypress (Cupressocyparis Leylandi) @ 10' apart
LENNOX AVE.		Match existing	Washington Hawthorne (Crataegus phaenopyrum)* @ 30' apart in grassed area between curb and sidewalk
FAIRMOUNT AVE.	Pennsylvania Ave. to Towsontown Boulevard	Type B	Hedge Maple (Acer campestre)* @ 30' apart
EUDOWOOD LANE		Type B	Hedge Maple (Acer campestre)* @ 30' apart
RAILROAD AVE.		Type B	Hedge Maple (Acer campestre)* @ 30' apart

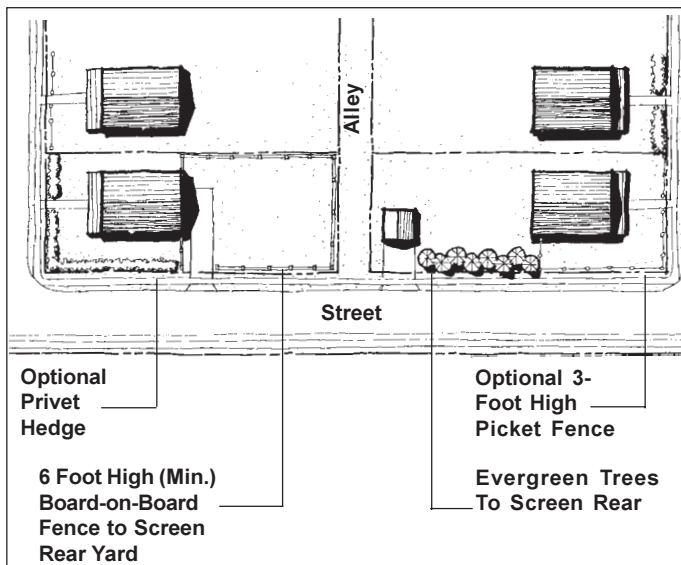
Notes:

1. Tree spacing may be varied to accommodate existing conditions.
2. (*) The Hedge Maple and Washington Hawthorne are low canopy trees. See Section 7.1(b) for additional planting requirements.

7.0 LANDSCAPING

7.1 Performance Standard: Use appropriate landscaping which contributes to the historic character of the neighborhood.

- (a) To the maximum extent possible, retain all existing trees over 8" caliper that are in good condition.
- (b) Where the presence of overhead utility lines limits the height of trees provided as part of the streetscape design, or the right-of-way width is inadequate, place high canopy trees in the front or side yard. Ornamental and evergreen trees and shrubs should also be included in the front and/or side yards for seasonal color. Suggested species and location are in the Streetscape Design Table on page 12.



Screening of the rear yards of corner lots will improve the appearance of the neighborhood.

High-Canopy Trees

(Front and Side Yard):

Littleleaf Linden (*Tilia cordata*)
Red Maple (*Acer rubrum* cultivars)
Red Oak (*Quercus borealis*)
Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)

Ornamental Trees

(Front and Side Yard):

Korean Dogwood (*Cornus Kousa*)
Sargent's Cherry (*Prunus sargentii*)
Star magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*)
Washington Hawthorne (*Crataegus phaenopyrum*)

Evergreen Trees

(Screening):

American Holly (*Ilex opaca*)
Canadian Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)
Norway spruce (*Picea abies*)
Serbian spruce (*Picea omorika*)

Shrubs

(Screening):

Azalea species (*Rhododendron* sp.)
Lilac varieties (*Syringa vulgaris*)
Viburnum species (*Viburnum* sp.)
Yew species (*Taxus* sp.)

7.2 Performance Standard: Use landscape elements to screen undesirable views.

- (a) Screen all parking, pools, storage areas, etc., visible from the street using Class A or Class B screens as defined in the *Baltimore County Landscape Manual*.

8.0 SIGNAGE

8.1 Performance Standard: Coordinate signage to contribute to the historic character of the neighborhood.

- (a) All signs shall be compatible with the colors of the building.
- (b) All signage in the RO and ROA zoning districts shall be mounted flush on the building wall, porch railing or front fence.* Freestanding signs are not permitted.
- (c) Signs for institutional uses may be free-standing but are limited in size to 15 square feet per side and 5-foot height.**
- (d) Signs shall not be internally illuminated.***



The small sign attached to the porch railing of this building is in keeping with the historic character of the building. The light fixture in the foreground also contributes to the historic ambience.

* The zoning regulations do not currently permit signs on railings or fences in RO or ROA zones.

** The zoning regulations currently permit freestanding signs up to 25 sq. ft. in area and six feet in height for institutional uses; the zoning regulations do not permit freestanding signs for industrial uses.

***The zoning regulations permit signs for institutional uses to be illuminated.



Site walls which employ local stone similar to that used at the Carver Center reinforce the historic character of East Towson.

9.0 ADDITIONAL SITE AND BUILDING ELEMENTS

9.1 Performance Guideline: Employ site furniture and other site elements to contribute to the historic character of the neighborhood.

- (a) All front and side yard fencing should be 3-foot high (max.) white tubular aluminum, painted wood, or wood wrapped with vinyl in a rail and picket design that is opaque.
- (b) All site and retaining walls shall be stone, brick, or formed concrete treated to match the wall at the Carver Community Center, as closely as possible.
- (c) Screen trash cans, dumpsters and mechanical, communications, and electrical equipment, including those mounted to the ground, wall, or roof, with landscaping or within enclosures that are an integral part of the architectural or site design, or place in the rear yard out of public view.
- (d) Provide adequate exterior lighting for security purposes, but do not produce glare on neighboring properties. Use visually unobtrusive spot light fixtures or decorative fixtures which reflect the historic character of the neighborhood.
- (e) Use only retractable canvas awnings or canopies in a compatible color, if desired.

APPENDICES

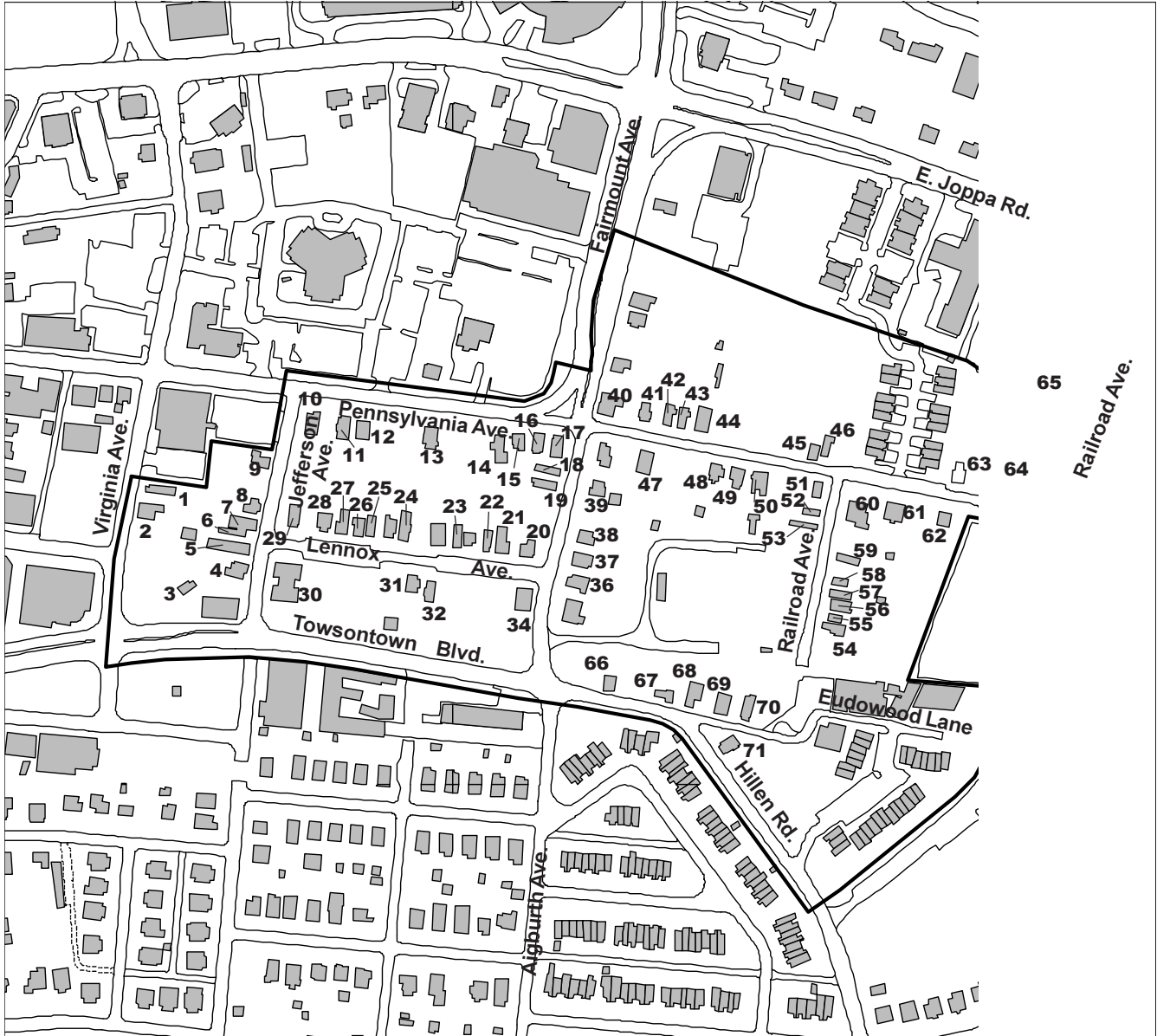
Appendix A: Maryland Historical Trust Inventory,
East Towson Area

Appendix B: Secretary of the Interior's Standards for
Rehabilitation

Appendix C: Financial Assistance

APPENDIX A

Maryland Historic Trust Inventory East Towson Area



Legend



East Towson
Boundary

42

Reference Number
for MHT Inventory
Number (See Key at
Right)

MHT Inventory Numbers
(See Map at Left)

1 ---- BA 1026	37 --- BA 1017
2 ---- BA 1035	38 --- BA 1018
3 ---- BA 1038	39 --- BA 1036
4 ---- BA 1039	40 --- BA 1037
5 ---- BA 1002	41 --- BA 1021
6 ---- BA 1001	42 --- BA 1053
7 ---- BA 1000	43 --- BA 1054
8 ---- BA 1040	44 --- BA 1055
9 ---- BA 1042	45 --- BA 1057
10 --- BA 1043	46 --- BA 1058
11 --- BA 1044	47 --- BA 1049
12 --- BA 1045	48 --- BA 1050
13 --- BA 1047	49 --- BA 1057
14 --- BA 1078	50 --- BA 1052
15 --- BA 1098	51 --- BA 1059
16 --- BA 1079	52 --- BA 1065
17 --- BA 1080	53 --- BA 1066
18 --- BA 1019	54 --- BA 1072
19 --- BA 1020	55 --- BA 1071
20 --- BA 1029	56 --- BA 1070
21 --- BA 1011	57 --- BA 1069
22 --- BA 1010	58 --- BA 1068
23 --- BA 1009	59 --- BA 1067
24 --- BA 1008	60 --- BA 1082
25 --- BA 1007	61 --- BA 1081
26 --- BA 1006	62 --- BA 1062
27 --- BA 1005	63 --- Razing Permit Approved
28 --- BA 1004	64 --- BA 1064
29 --- BA 1003	65 --- BA 1063
30 --- BA 1075	66 --- BA 1097
31 --- BA 1013	67 --- BA 1074
32 --- BA 1014	68 --- BA 1096
33 --- Razed	69 --- BA 1095
34 --- BA 1012	70 --- BA 1094
35 --- Razed	71 --- BA 1087
36 --- BA 1016	

APPENDIX B

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Standards that follow were originally published in 1977 and revised in 1990 as part of Department of the Interior regulations (36 CFR Part 67, Historic Preservation Certifications). They pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior of historic buildings. The Standards also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent or related new construction.

The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

APPENDIX C

Available Financing Programs Baltimore County Office of Community Conservation

Settlement Expense Loan Program (SELP) – Provides up to \$5,000 in closing costs to assist first-time home buyers whose income is at or below 80% of area median.

The Single Family Rehabilitation Loan Program; Emergency Repair Program; and, the Maryland Housing Rehabilitation Program – Provides loans up to \$25,000 to assist homeowners whose household income does not exceed 80% of area median.

Maryland Mortgage Program – CDA insured mortgage offering below market interest rate loans for home buyers in Baltimore County Community Conservation Areas. This program also assists disabled individuals.



Baltimore County
Office of Planning
County Courts Building
401 Bosley Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204

<http://www.baltimorecountyonline.info>