



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

April 29, 2019

**MEMORANDUM**

**To: Historic Preservation Commission**  
**From: John Liebertz, Historic Preservation Specialist, Montgomery County Planning**  
**Subject: Derwood Store and Post Office (22/33-3), 15911 Redland Road, Designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation***

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Staff Recommendation: List the Derwood Store and Post Office, 15911 Redland Road, in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

Background: In 1976, the Derwood Historic District (encompassing the entire community) was listed on the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) evaluated the historic district and recommended that it be designated in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* in 1984. The HPC found that it retained historic and architectural significance as a turn-of-the-century railroad community. Six years later, however, the County Council determined that Derwood did not merit designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and removed the district from the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*. At that time, the County Council added one individual site, the Crabb Family Cemetery, to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

In the 2000s, residents of Derwood reinforced the community's value for its history and character. Community members requested that individual sites within Derwood (previously denied designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and removed from the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*) be reconsidered for historic designation. The Planning Board relisted the Derwood Store and Post Office in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* in 2004. Two years later, the *Shady Grove Sector Plan* (2006) recommended evaluation of the Derwood Store and Post Office for designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and re-evaluation of four individual properties for listing in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*. These properties are: Derwood Baptist Church (15812 Esquire Court); Derwood School (15805 Paramount Drive); Hall's Store (15833 Derwood Road); and the Hoskinson-Schwartz House (15919 Chieftain Avenue). The Hall's Store was demolished in 2018.

The *Shady Grove Sector Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment* (ongoing) will recommend removal of these individual resources for evaluation for listing in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*. All of the resources were reviewed and rejected by the County Council in 1990. Absent a request by the owner to designate the property in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, these resources will not be re-examined as part of the Historic Preservation Office's work program.

The subject designation request comports with the direction provided in the *Shady Grove Sector Plan* (2006) and initiated in consultation with and support of the property owner.

Discussion: Historic Preservation staff reviewed existing documentation and conducted extensive research on the history of the Derwood Store and Post Office. Efforts included review of primary and secondary sources related to the development of Derwood, the owners of the subject building and

postmasters, and alterations to the building. As noted in Section J of the Designation Report, staff finds that the subject property satisfies four criteria as listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Ordinance:

**1.A Historic and cultural significance. The historic resource has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation.**

The Derwood Store and Post Office is associated with: 1) the creation of railroad communities along the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad towards the end of the nineteenth century; 2) the inclusion of post offices within general merchandise stores; 3) the commercial and social importance of general merchandise stores in small towns and rural areas; and 4) Derwood's history as a manufacturing town in the early twentieth century.

**1.D Historic and cultural significance. The historic resource exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the county and its communities.**

The Derwood Store and Post Office serves as a reminder of the slowly eroding rural and manufacturing character of Derwood in the early twentieth century. In addition, the store's inclusion of a post office further augments its historic significance. Derwood had at least three women postmasters who served the community for over 17 years. The contributions of these women are not identifiable in other sites or resources within the surrounding community.

**2.A Architectural and design significance. The historic resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.**

The Derwood Store and Post Office retains sufficient elements of its design and materials to express its period of significance as a turn of the twentieth-century general merchandise store. The vernacular two-story, front-gable form and porch are character defining elements of a rural general store. Unlike other similar stores, the Derwood Store is embellished with a stamped tin shingle roof instead of a standing-seam metal roof or asphalt shingle roof. The wood siding remains intact under the asbestos shingle and has the potential to be restored.

**2.E Architectural and design significance. The historic resource represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.**

The Derwood Store and Post Office is the oldest commercial building within historic Derwood. Other commercial buildings associated with the area's manufacturing history, such as the Derwood Mill, were destroyed in the mid-twentieth century by a fire. The Hall's Store at 15833 Derwood Road was demolished in 2018. Inherent to general merchandise stores, the building continues to be located at a highly-visible intersection within the community and has become a local landmark. For these reasons, the store serves as a tangible link between the community and its past, providing a sense of continuity, orientation, and place as a former center of commercial and social activities.

As part of listing the subject property to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and update to the *Shady Grove Sector Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment*, the HPC should support rezoning the property from R-200 (residential) to an applicable and appropriate Commercial/Residential zoning category to allow for adaptive reuse and multi-family redevelopment, parking waivers, and modified setback

requirements necessary for the rehabilitation/restoration of the store. While the property will be regulated by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (pending the approval of the district), the HPC should discuss rehabilitation/restoration requirements related to the building. Staff recommends that any future proposals include the restoration of the façade, including, but not limited to the opening of the enclosed porch to reflect the architecture typical of general merchandise stores.

Conclusion: The Derwood Store and Post Office retains sufficient historic and physical integrity to convey its period of construction and historic significance. The Historic Preservation Office recommends the property be listed in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.