

Resolution No.: 11-2285
Introduced: October 16, 1990
Adopted: October 16, 1990

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
SITTING AS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PORTION
OF THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL DISTRICT
WITHIN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: District Council

Subject: Amendment to the Approved and Adopted Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County Maryland re: Cedar Grove Historic District

Background

1. On May 1, 1990, the County Executive transmitted to the Montgomery County Council a Final Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation with a recommendation that Cedar Grove not be designated as a historic district.
2. On June 19, 1990, the County Council held a public hearing regarding the proposed Cedar Grove Historic District.
3. Due to time constraints, this master plan amendment was not scheduled for review by the Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee.
4. At a worksession held on October 16, 1990, the District Council reviewed the Historic Preservation Master Plan for the proposed Cedar Grove Historic District and voted to designate the area as a historic district.

Action

The Final Draft Amendment to the Historic Preservation Master Plan: Cedar Grove Historic District is approved as follows:

THE AMENDMENT

The purpose of this amendment is to designate one district in Montgomery County on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, thereby extending to it the protection of the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

<u>Atlas #</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Location</u>
14/27	Cedar Grove Historic District	Intersection of Route 27 and Davis Mill Road (See map of boundaries)

Historic Significance of the Resource:

Cedar Grove is significant as one of the few continuously operating rural crossroads communities serving farm families for over a century. Relatively unchanged over the years, it retains its original character and rural identity as a cohesive collection of 19th and early 20th century buildings that provide a community meeting place and focal point.

Historically...

- Cedar Grove was once a part of the 200 acre Oliver T. Watkins farm, purchased in 1851 from Watkins' uncle, Vincent Brewer. The original farmhouse, built at the time of the Civil War, stands near the road. A second, more sophisticated Victorian house was built by Watkins in 1871 and is located in the nearby Ovid Hazen Wells Park. It reflects Watkins' success as a farmer and businessman. This house is already listed as an individual site on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.
- In 1877, Watkins built the first Cedar Grove general store and postoffice, which served area families as a meeting place and source of supplies. This building was at the same location as the current general store.
- In 1888, the Upper Seneca Baptist Church--the fourth oldest Baptist congregation in Maryland, founded in 1805--built a new church in Cedar Grove on a one acre parcel given to the church by Watkins' wife, Eleanor. The Watkins family is buried in the cemetery behind the church, as are generations of Cedar Grove families.
- James O. King bought the Watkins' store at Cedar Grove in 1901 and, in 1909, replaced the original structure with the current store. He also built several houses: 24311 Ridge Road before 1900, and 24301 Ridge Road in 1911. King continued the Watkins' tradition of living near his business by residing in 24301 Ridge Road while operating the Cedar Grove store. The house at 23351 Davis Mill Road was also built by the King family in 1912.

- In 1904, the Watkins' heirs sold additional land to the Upper Seneca Baptist Church for a parsonage built in 1916-17. It has recently been razed for the construction of a new church facility.

Architectural Significance of the Resource:

Architecturally, the Cedar Grove Historic District is characteristic of late 19th/early 20th century rural crossroads villages which were once common but are rapidly becoming extinct in the County. It is a part of an overall rural development pattern, which represents the County's period of agricultural prominence.

Typically these small rural centers contained a church and cemetery, general store and postoffice, sometimes a school, a few houses of vernacular architecture, and usually a blacksmith or wheelwright (later a gas station) to service local residents and travelers.

Land parcels, clustered at the intersection of two roads, generally lack uniformity of size or shape. Set-backs are irregular as are the side yards, which were ample enough for gardens, a few livestock and large family gatherings. There are no street grids, sidewalks or deep shoulders along the highway. The handful of houses are a mix of ages, styles, sizes, and materials. They extend in several directions from the crossroads and form a cohesive group. Cedar Grove is reflective of this type of crossroads, unaffected by modern infill.

Although the individual components of the district are modest, they are--when taken together--a significant and distinguishable entity that convey a historic sense of time and place.

The contributing resources in the historic district are:

- The Upper Seneca Baptist Church, a community landmark, is a fine example of late 19th century rural church architecture. It has been modified slightly over the past 100 years to include a basement (1937) and education annex (1954). It is a simple rectangular frame building with a front facing gable roof. Arched stained glass windows appear on front and side elevations. The cemetery is behind the church.
- 23401 Ridge Road, the James Obed King House, is a large Queen Anne-style structure with arched windows in the gable ends and a wrap-around front porch. It was built circa 1911.
- 23411 Ridge Road, the Obed/Beall House. Built prior to 1900, this simplified Queen Anne-style house is a cross-gable frame structure.

- 23406 Ridge Road, the Oliver T. Watkins House. This is the oldest structure in the district, having probably been built between 1865 and 1877. It is a two-story frame vernacular house with a standing-seam metal roof. It was built in two continuous sections and is united by a one-story, shed roof porch across the front facade.
- 23412 Ridge Road, the Cedar Grove General Merchandise Store, was built in 1909 to replace the original Watkins' store established on this site in 1877. A two-story frame, gable-front structure, it is one of a handful of commercial buildings from this period in the county, and is one of the few still functioning as a store.
- 23351 Davis Mill Road. This house is a two-story stuccoed American Four Square-style house built in 1912. It too was built by the King family and has had a very limited number of owners in its 78 year history. Although non-contiguous with the rest of the district, this resource is historically and architecturally connected.

Specifically excluded from the district is the site of the former church parsonage (Parcel P33) and the site of a proposed new church building (Parcel N77). Also excluded is the gas station (Parcel P981) adjacent to the Cedar Grove Store.

Planning Implications

Located midway between Damascus and Germantown, Cedar Grove is on the border of the Agricultural Reserve, but is also near areas of major new development. The adjoining Ovid Hazen Wells Park and the RDT zoning to the south and east of the district act as visual buffers, despite nearby suburban development. Cedar Grove still retains its rural character and vistas.

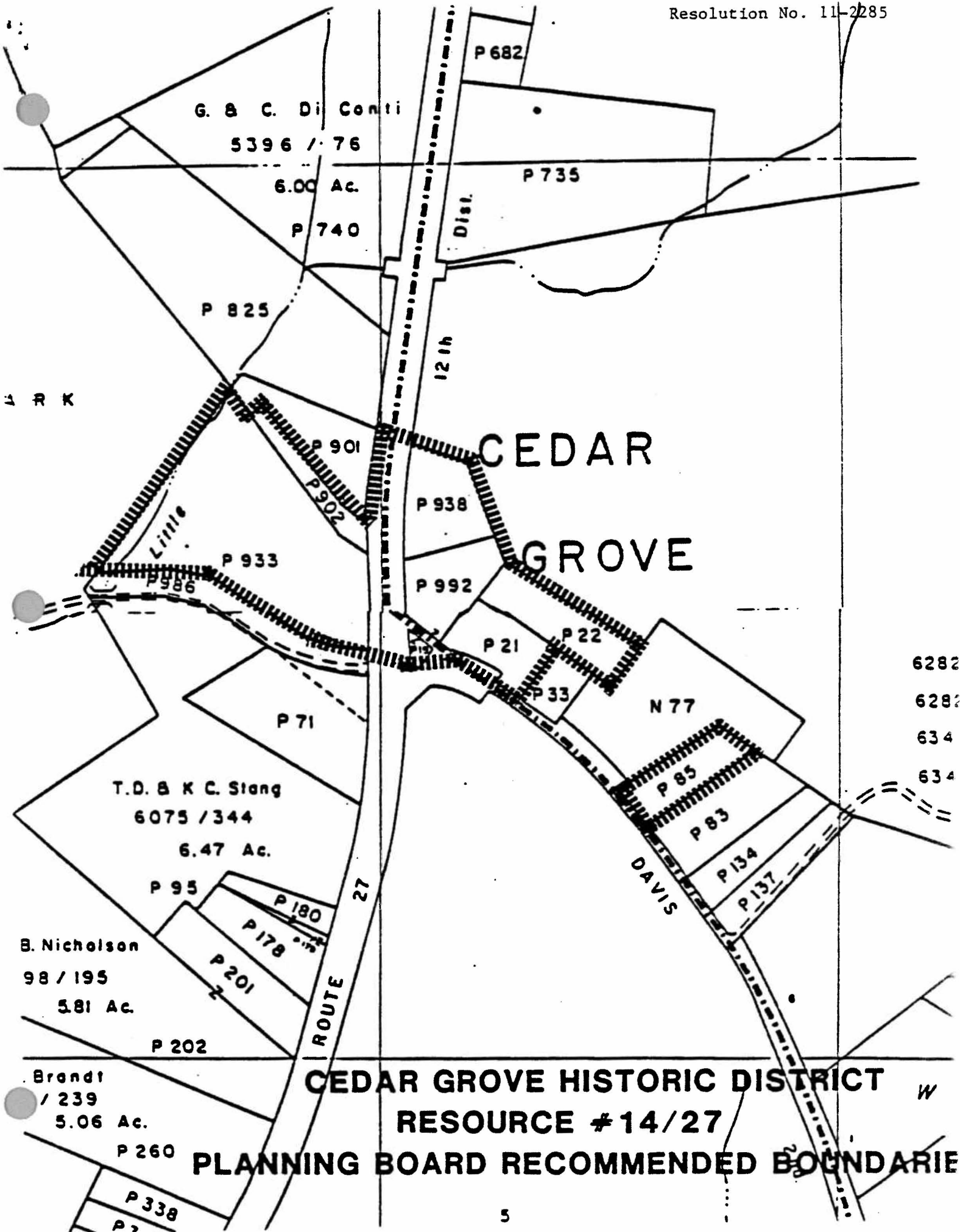
Ridge Road (Maryland Route 27) through Cedar Grove is classified on the Master Plan of Highways as a major highway. Presently it is a heavily traveled two-lane road. Its eventual widening would destroy Cedar Grove's cohesive character and would require the demolition or moving of several important structures.

However, Ridge Road may be an essential connector between areas in northern Montgomery County as well as adjoining counties, such as Howard and Frederick, and employment centers along the I270 Corridor. For this reason the Planning Board recommends that the historic designation of the the Cedar Grove Historic District be reviewed and revisited in connection with the Clarksburg and Damascus Bypass Master Plan processes.

Conclusion

Cedar Grove is an excellent, intact, and identifiable example of a rural cross roads community reflecting the life and character of Montgomery County's rich agricultural heritage from 1870 to the present. The buildings in the district retain a high degree of their architectural and historical integrity.

Although the disposition of Route 27 will impact the district, it is important to identify this collection of structures as a cultural and historical resource, deserving of special consideration and protection.



This is a correct copy of Council action.



Kathleen A. Freedman, CMC
Secretary of the Council

APPROVED:


Sidney Kramer, County Executive

10/29/90
Date