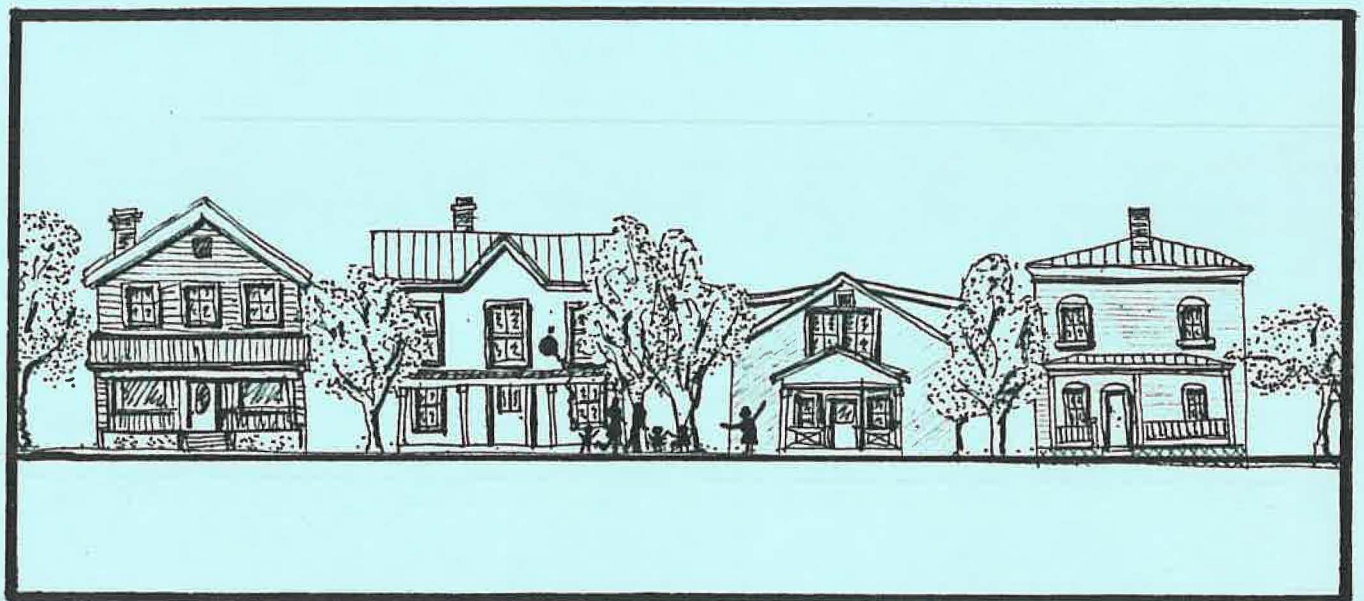


CU-32

CULPEPER



Historic Preservation Plan

1986

Historic Preservation Plan
for
Culpeper, Virginia

--prepared by students of the Schools of Architecture and Law in the
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic preservation is the activity of saving or preserving the physical legacy of our predecessors. This legacy includes buildings, landmarks, landscapes, and archaeological sites which help us to understand the development of our own heritage. Preservation implies our concern in remembering the past and in keeping a part of that past for today and for future generations.

Often preservation activities are concerned with the saving of specific buildings which were key factors in some critical event in our national history. We should, however, also realize that there is a historical continuity or integrity which cannot be expressed by a solitary building, but which is seen in context with adjacent structures. Thus, a major concern of preservation has been the saving of entire neighborhoods and towns. These historic districts maintain the integrity of our cultural environment while allowing communities to live and grow.

The realization that every generation has made its contribution to our history has been of major importance to current preservation values. There is currently an attempt to maintain the architectural accretions of the ages when working with preservation. Whether the concern is for nineteenth century warehouses, historic battlefields, the ambience of a Victorian market street, or the gentle charm of a community with a little bit of everything, there is a program of historic preservation ready to assist the group or individual interested in the maintenance of their town's historic character. One of the most effective ways of preserving and utilizing historic buildings and the areas in which they are found is through preservation planning.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The planning effort discussed in this report was initiated by the Culpeper Town Office of Planning and Zoning as part of a subgrant from the Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks. The purpose was to provide the town with a historic preservation master plan. This would be a coordinating action plan for all parties, public and private with interests in the preservation and redevelopment of Culpeper.

Although historic preservation was understood to be the major focus of the plan, other issues such as urban design, commercial development, housing, and transportation were found to be critically interrelated in Culpeper. It was also clear that the proposals needed to be practical and feasible, therefore the Culpeper preservation plan is intended to be a framework for action and establishing criteria for evaluation of commitment. The plan is not the answer to preservation in Culpeper. It is meant to be a guide for citizen participation and achieving the goals that they wish to see in historic Culpeper.

CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW

The town of Culpeper has rich history of over two hundred years. English settlement of this part of the Fairfax (later renamed Culpeper in 1870) was officially established by the Virginia Assembly in 1759 as the Culpeper County Seat. In the same year, the first ten blocks of Culpeper were, according to tradition, surveyed by George Washington. (See page 5, map A)

Few buildings survive from this early period of Culpeper's history. The Burgandine House (predates 1750), now owned by the Culpeper Historical Society, may be the oldest extant building in the town. One of the only other pre-Revolutionary War buildings within the town limits is the Morris House which is now located at 113 Spencer Street.

Culpeper experienced a strong period of growth from 1830 to 1860, largely due to the opening of the Alexandria and Orange Railroad through the town in 1852. The town became a regional trading center with the construction of hotels, warehouses and a mill. Some of the more notable homes remaining from this period include: the Magnolia Inn (1835), the Hill Mansion (1853-1855), the Jefferies-Jones House (1856), the Margaret Brown House (1858), and the old Pulliam House (1860). (See page 5, map B)

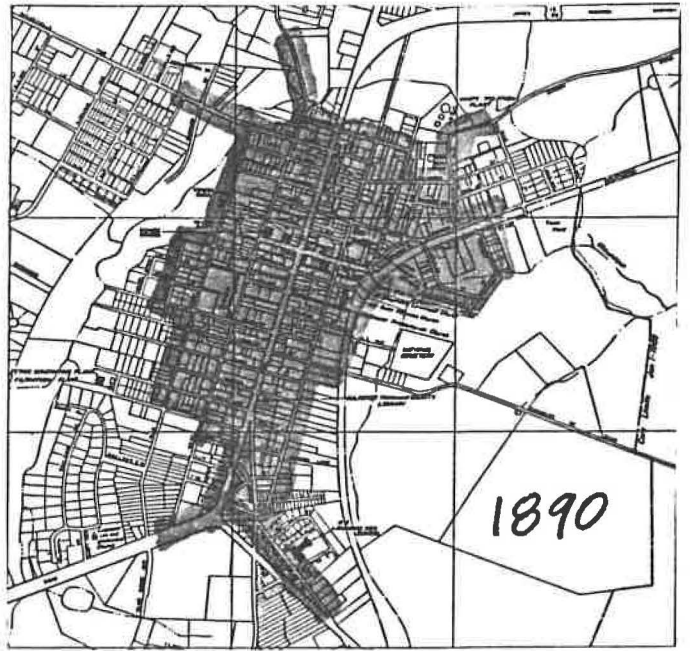
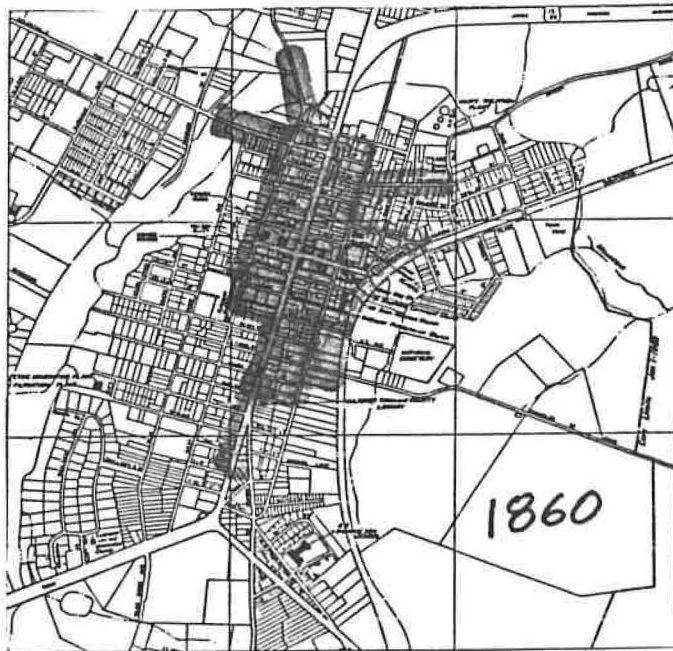
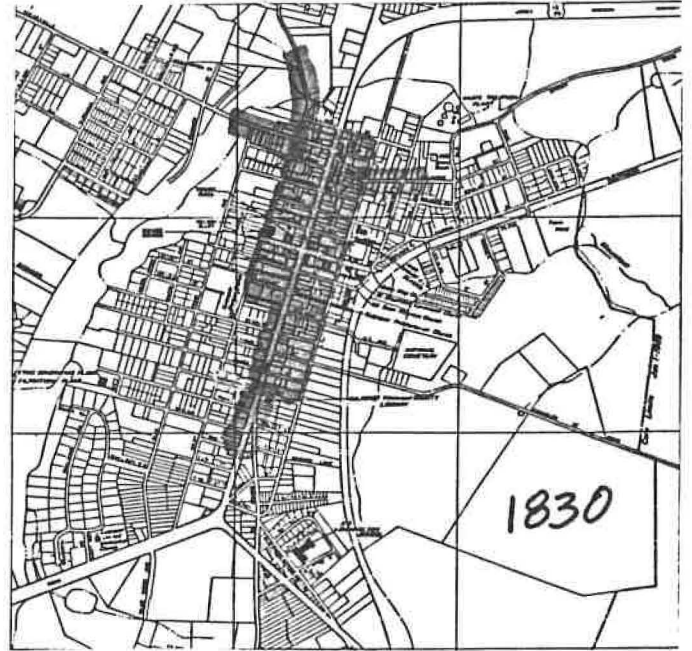
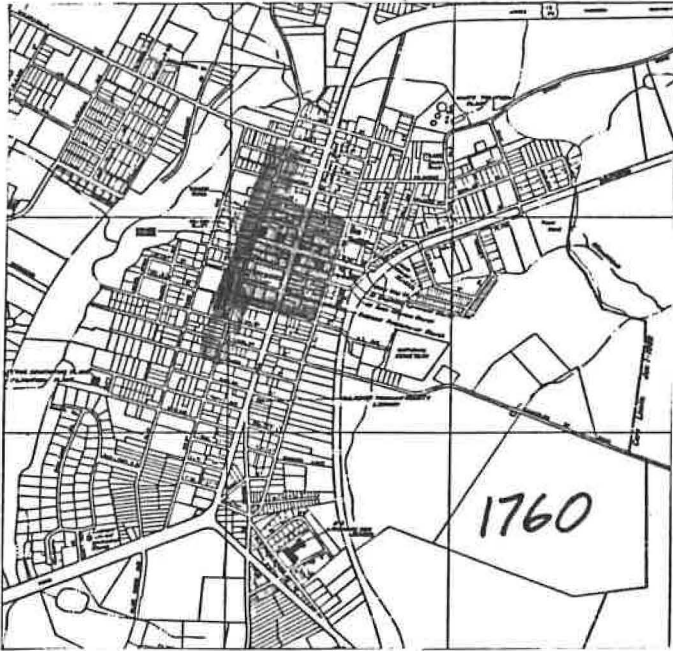
The Culpeper area was the site of over one hundred battles and skirmishes during the Civil War. The largest cavalry battle ever fought on this continent took place at Brandy Station, a short distance north of town. Thousands of troops also clashed at the strategic battle of Cedar Mountain outside of the town. Because of this intense action, many of the houses and

public buildings of the town were used as hospitals. (See page 5, map C)

Culpeper again grew during the Reconstruction period. Between 1870 and 1914, Davis Street developed as the commercial and governmental center of the town. By 1900, the east end of Davis Street took on much of the appearance it has today. With the growth of Culpeper's commercial areas came a growth in residential areas both north and south of downtown. Victorian houses were constructed along East, Cameron, Piedmont, and Fairfax Streets, and another residential area developed along Blue Ridge Avenue in the southwest section of the town. It is these houses, in a variety of styles, which contribute to the richness of the town's residential architecture. One of the finest houses of this period is the brick Second Empire style Greenlawn on North Main Street. (See page 5, map D)

In the period since the first world war, Culpeper has continued to grow. New buildings have been constructed in the downtown area in a variety of styles including fine examples of Colonial Revival and bungalow style architecture. These twentieth century buildings contribute to the town's diverse and rich architectural legacy which should be safeguarded for future generations to enjoy.

With the 1968 annexations of outlying farms and developments, Culpeper absorbed other historic properties including areas along Sperryville Pike, Rixeysville Road and along old Fredericksburg Road. Indeed, historic Culpeper can be found not only in the downtown, but also in the residential neighborhoods well outside of the early borders of old Culpeper. These significant properties, throughout the town, give Culpeper its special small town character.



HISTORICAL SEQUENCE OF CULPEPER DEVELOPMENT

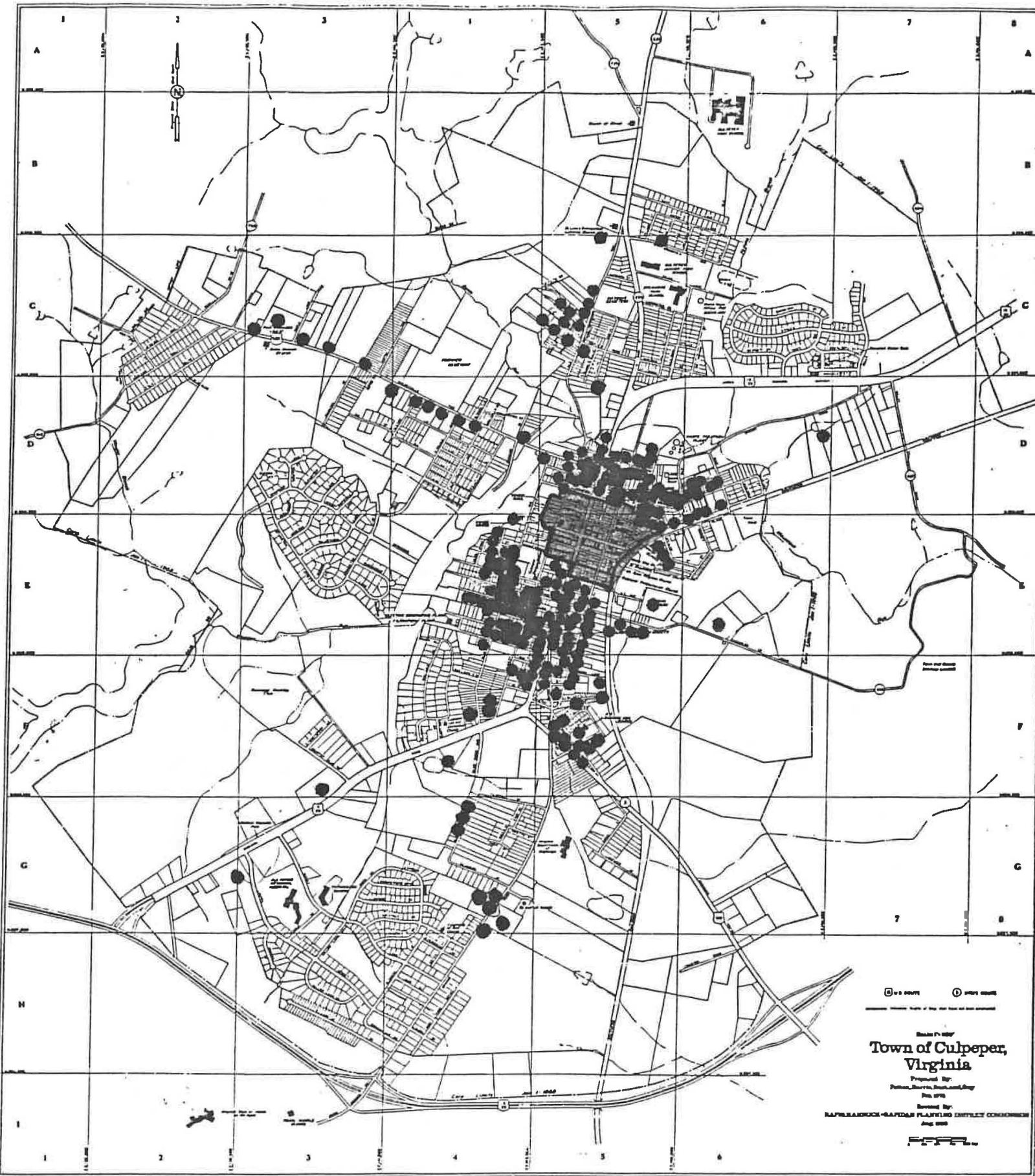
SURVEYS OF SIGNIFICANT PROPERTIES

Other surveys of Culpeper have documented the architectural and historical significance of many buildings in the downtown area. The central business district was designated as a historic district in 1982. (See page 9) Plans are underway to extend this district to include the nineteenth century residential area of South East Street. Both of those areas are currently being surveyed by the National Preservation Institute in preparation for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Several buildings have already received individual listing in the National Register. These include the A.P. Hill Boyhood Home at the corner of Davis and Main Streets, the Hill Mansion on South East Street and Greenlawn.

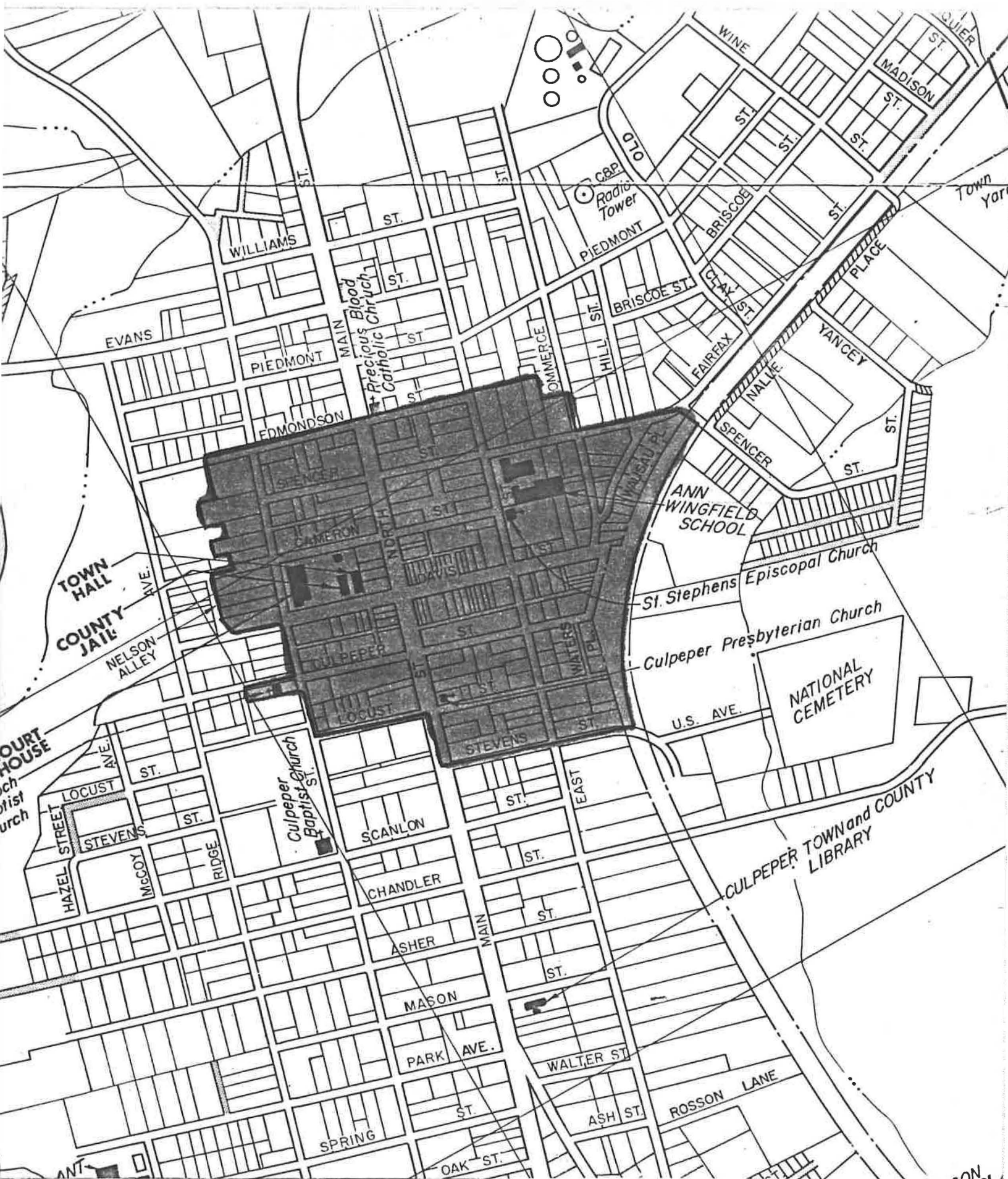
Many significant buildings are also located outside of downtown. The Piedmont-Fairfax Street area contains many fine Victorian houses. Blue Ridge Avenue and surrounding streets are lined with large turn-of-the-century houses. Other neighborhoods to the northeast and south of downtown also contain architecturally and culturally significant structures. Significant residential and industrial areas are also located on major roads leading from the central business district, such as Rixeyville Road, Sperryville Pike, and Old Fredericksburg Road.

To ensure that Culpeper retains its significant architectural heritage, it is critical that a detailed survey of the entire town be undertaken. As a first step, a map representing the results of a "windshield survey" of the town is included in this report. (See page 8.) Attention should also be given to possible sites of archaeological findings. More intensive

**exploration of possible historically and architecturally significant areas
should be undertaken in the near future.**



SIGNIFICANT SITES IN CULPEPER



EXISTING DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

GOALS OF THE PRESERVATION PLAN

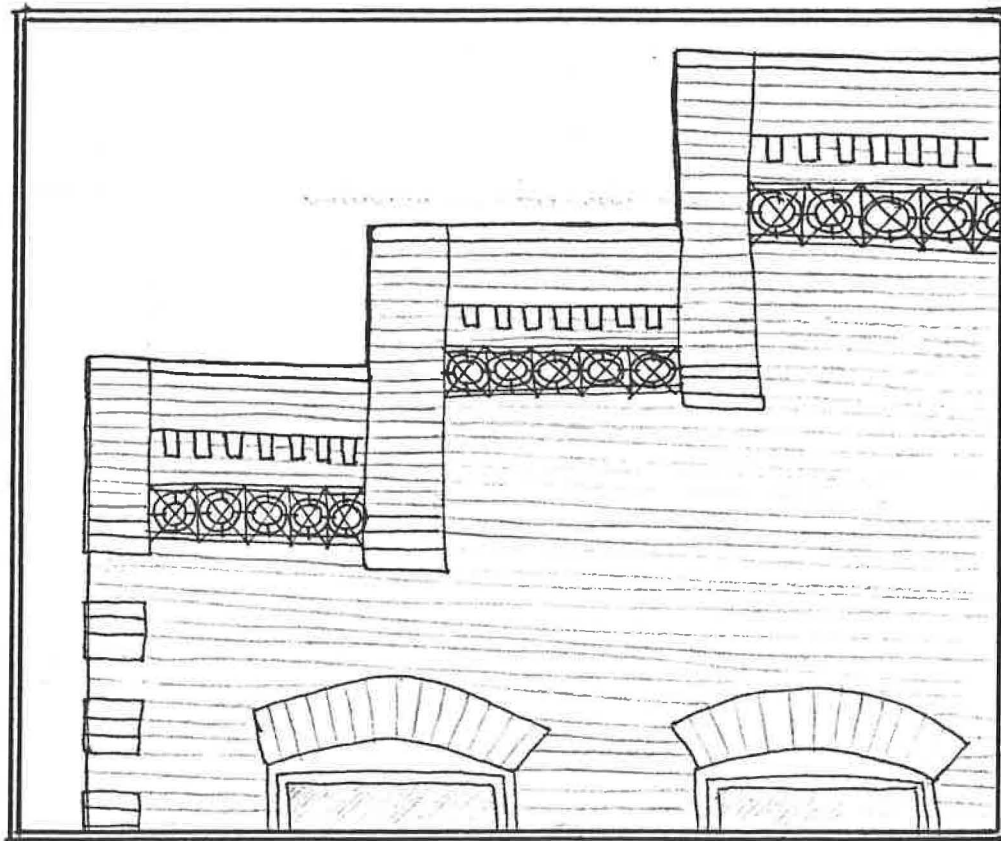
The overall goal of this plan is to promote the social, cultural, architectural, and economic benefits of historic preservation in Culpeper. Currently, preservation in town has a broad base of support and is generally seen as a good thing. The town has created a Historic and Cultural Conservation Board, designated a downtown local historic district by ordinance, and is preparing applications for a National Register Historic District for downtown and South East Street.

Culpeper has invested a great deal of time in preserving its historical and architectural landmarks. These efforts, however, have mostly been uncoordinated among the different groups interested in preservation in Culpeper. This plan's goals seek to combine local resources and also direct them towards a comprehensive strategy for preservation.

To do this, we recommend that the town adopt these four goals to bring about a successful preservation program:

- 1) Education: To promote preservation education and citizen awareness of preservation activities in the Town of Culpeper.
- 2) Architecture: To protect the cultural and architectural heritage of the Town of Culpeper by identification of significant properties and determination of the appropriate location and character of new development.
- 3) Economics: To enhance the commercial viability of downtown Culpeper utilizing the economic benefits of historic preservation.
- 4) Legal: To coordinate the town laws and plans into other historic preservation activities.

Following these four goals are recommended objectives that the town should follow to complete the program.



EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

GOAL: To promote preservation education and citizen awareness of preservation activities in the Town of Culpeper.

OBJECTIVES.

A. We recommend the town consider the following items:

1. Utilize media to publicize the preservation, history and architecture of Culpeper through periodic columns or contests in local newspapers; record and publish local oral histories; publicize current events on all local radio and television and in any local periodicals.
2. Distribute pamphlets about historic preservation in Culpeper. These should include a 1) general information pamphlet for all citizens, 2) specific guidelines for property owners in the historic district, and 3) pamphlets on topics such as facade improvements, preservation grants, loan programs, housing rehabilitation, tax credits, etc. as they become relevant to Culpeper.
3. Implement a walking tour to showcase Culpeper's historic architectural resources.
4. Utilize the Town Minute Man logo to create a consciousness of the town's history and architecture, specifically of the Historic District; use on letterheads, pamphlets, tourist maps, etc.
5. Have authorities from the state historic preservation office, preservation societies and scholars make presentations on preservation topics to increase awareness among local organizations.

6. Create a museum to encompass the proposed Cavalry Museum with historic artifacts, photographs and information on historic Culpeper.
7. Create an educational program in cooperation with the County school system (either a one-time assembly or ongoing classroom activities) to familiarize students with local history, historic buildings and preservation.

B. Because there is no central historic preservation organization in Culpeper at present, historic preservation education will require the cooperation and commitment of several existing organizations, town staff and town officials. The Culpeper Historical Society, the HCCB, the Culpeper Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Association, the Town Council and the Town Planner can each play important roles in increasing citizen awareness of the importance and benefits of historic preservation activities in Culpeper.

ARCHITECTURAL OBJECTIVES

GOAL: To protect the cultural and architectural heritage of the Town of Culpeper by identification of significant properties and determination of the appropriate location and character of future development.

OBJECTIVES:

A. Inventory.

Culpeper should seek to inventory and evaluate the historical and architectural heritage that it has throughout the town. This study could be helpful in future plans and locations for development and protection of sensitive areas. This survey can be done with consideration and evaluation of four aspects of each building in Culpeper that is over a certain age, for example, more than 50 years old. Those aspects are as follows:

1. The historical significance of the structure. How important is the building in the history of Culpeper and the region? Did an important person live there? Did an important event take place there?
2. The architectural significance of the structure. Is the building a good example of a particular architectural style? Is the building unique in Culpeper or in the region?
3. The physical context of the structure. Does the building enhance the small-town setting that is an integral part of Culpeper? Does the building fit in with its current streetscape?
4. The physical condition of the structure. Is the building in good condition, deteriorating, or dilapidated?

For each of these four aspects, a numerical score can be assessed to each building, such as a 3 for excellent significance or condition, a 2 for average significance or condition, and a 1 for little significance or poor condition. From the results a map can be drawn to analyze where the most architecturally and historically significant structures are and where preservation activities should be focused. (See map on page 17.)

B. Urban Design Study.

The purpose of the study is to identify the factors likely to influence the pattern of development such as roads, land uses, economic trends, etc. and describe how these factors will affect change and how they can be shaped toward preserving the historic character of the town of Culpeper.

Objective of the study:

1. To protect areas of strong architectural and historic character, and ensure that the architecture of any new development in these areas will compliment the old.

2. To ensure that designated historic landmarks and districts are protected from demolition and inappropriate new development.

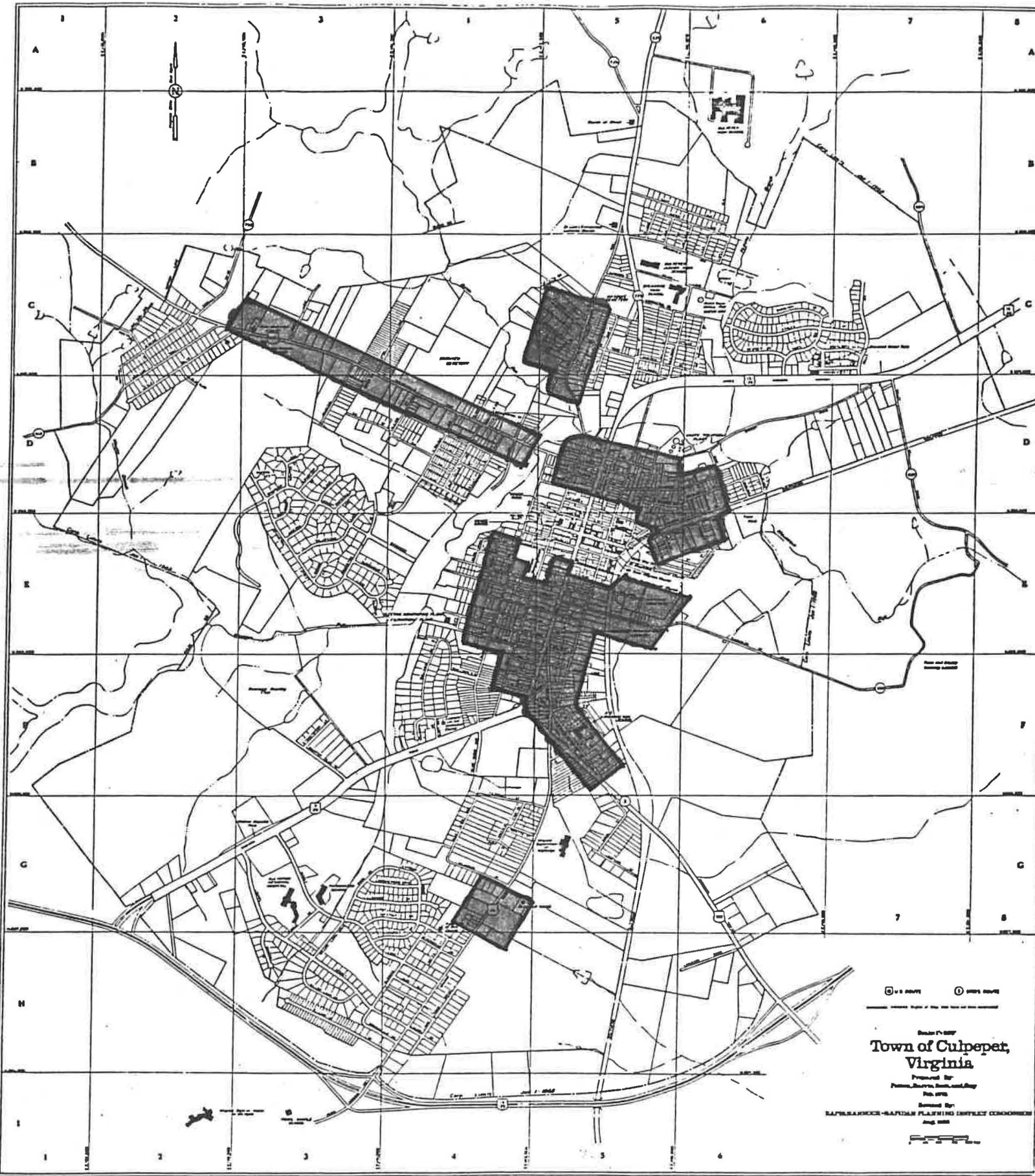
3. To ensure that the boundaries of areas with significant properties are respected, both to preserve the continuity of these areas and to prevent inappropriate encroachment.

4. To encourage in-fill development which will compliment the established character of the area. In-fill development should not create sharp changes in physical patterns which might lead to deterioration.

C. Design Criteria

The establishment of design criteria is an effective way of maintaining the small town feeling of Culpeper and ensuring that new buildings will not detract from any historically significant buildings they may be close to.

1. The guideline for new construction and in-fill should consider:
 - a. Materials, colors and textures used in the surrounding buildings.
 - b. Height and scale of surrounding buildings.
 - c. Form of the shape or massing of surrounding buildings.
 - d. Setbacks fo the surrounding buildings from their property lines.
 - e. Details such as cornerstones, cornices, and techniques used in the surrounding buildings.
 - f. Landscaping and other natural elements.
 - g. Paving, including sidewalks, paths, driveways, and parking spaces.
2. Implementation of criteria: A mechanism of supervision, such as an architectural review board, is needed to enforce the guidelines. This is necessary both inside and outside any historic districts because there are buildings of significance throughout the town of Culpeper.



SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FUTURE ANALYSIS

ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

GOAL: To enhance the commercial viability of downtown Culpeper by utilizing the economic benefits of historic preservation.

OBJECTIVES:

Culpeper is a community that should be especially sensitive to the economic potential of preservation activities. The currently designated historic district lies within Culpeper's central business district--its "downtown." Clearly, the commercial nature of any downtown makes it likely that its population, merchants and businessmen, will be especially concerned with historic preservation as a source of economic revitalization.

A. Economic Opportunities.

1. Culpeper's downtown community is in a position to realize the financial benefits of preservation. Indeed, preservation efforts might help secure the shifting position of Culpeper's downtown as the economic and cultural center of the community. This position is currently threatened by the construction of a shopping mall outside of town. Preservation of historic structures in the central business district could re-awaken interest in downtown, bringing consumers and casting the downtown as the traditional marketplace of a historic town.
2. Additionally, the rehabilitation of historic structures might give rise to new roles for the downtown. The charm of historic districts is an ideal setting for restaurants and nightspots. On the other hand, the renovation of vacant upper stories of downtown

buildings might address part of the need for affordable housing in the community.

3. Preservation activities can make historic Culpeper an attraction, not only for its citizens, but for regional tourists as well. As the Washington suburbs spread and become more densely urbanized, a historic rural community within an hour's drive might be an attractive destination for day and weekend trips.
4. As noted earlier, preservation is important in preserving significant parts of the culture of a community. In addition to the rather intangible benefits brought about by having attractive buildings in which to work, shop, and live, preservation can also provide tangible economic benefits to a community. These benefits include:
 - a. Energy savings. Less energy is required to rehabilitate existing buildings than to demolish and replace them with comparable new construction.
 - b. Financial savings. Rehabilitation is labor intensive and thus is not as influenced by the escalating costs of materials as new construction.
 - c. Tax savings. Tax dollars are saved through reuse of buildings served by in-place public utilities.
 - d. Property value increase. Property values may increase in revitalized areas. In addition, rehabilitated buildings returned to the tax rolls raise property tax revenues.
 - e. Increasing tax revenues. Revitalized buildings and historic districts attract new businesses, tourists, and visitors, stimulating retail sales and increasing sales tax revenue.

- f. **Increasing employment.** Renovation creates new jobs during construction and later in new offices, shops, restaurants and tourism activities.

B. Economic Tools for Preservation.

Both the public and private sectors have recognized the economic benefits which often result from preservation projects. Programs have been established to provide technical assistance, tax incentives, and grant funds to encourage preservation. Some programs of possible applicability to Culpeper are listed below.

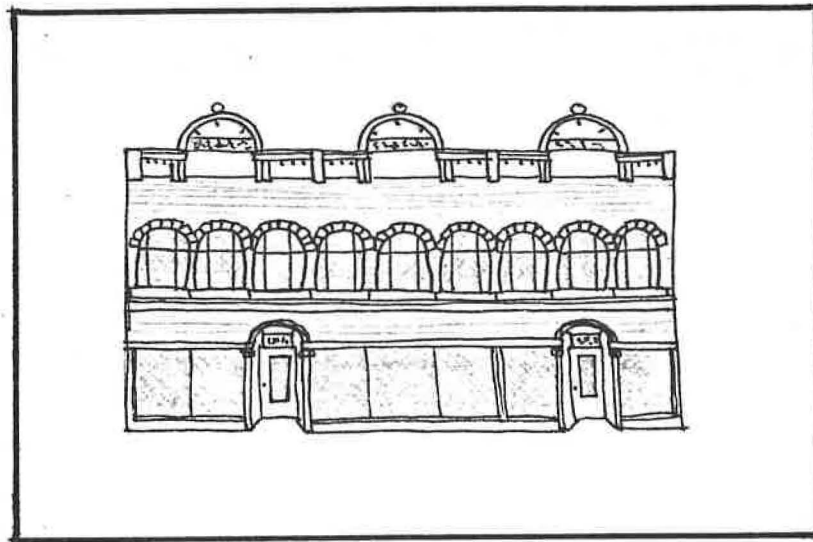
1. Before applying for support and technical assistance from any of these sources, it is recommended that the town establish a development corporation to direct preservation activities in the Main-Davis Streets commercial area. Such a corporation would help ensure that preservation remains a priority in the town, would provide the personnel necessary to direct and implement programs, and would provide a vehicle to raise funds for projects.

It is suggested that this development corporation be organized as a non-profit organization to make it eligible for corporate and foundation support. A board should be assembled which reflects the interest of the entire Culpeper community. This board should include representatives from the governmental, commercial, industrial, financial, real estate, and non-profit communities of the town. To be effective, the corporation should have at least one full-time staff member experienced in economic development strategies.

2. It is necessary to make information concerning the availability of financial programs accessible to the citizens of Culpeper. This may

be accomplished in part through the inclusion of a bibliography of preservation-oriented financial programs in the appendix of the preservation plan. Information on such material and other preservation incentives should also be made available through the Town Planning office in Culpeper.

3. A third recommendation is for Culpeper to become involved in historic preservation--economic development programs such as the Main Street Program and the Certified Local Government Program. The Main Street Program is operated from the state economic development commission to assist in the preservation and economic enhancement of qualified historic downtown centers. The Certified Local Government Program is also oriented to aid small towns preserve their downtown character.



LEGAL OBJECTIVES

GOAL: To coordinate the town laws and plans with other historic preservation objectives.

OBJECTIVES:

The effectiveness of the comprehensive plan and ordinance in achieving historic preservation depends largely upon enforcement. The ordinance contains the primary technical apparatus for achievement of the goals set by the Town Council and planners. Legally, the ordinance should be adopted and enforced in accordance with the goals set forth in the comprehensive plan; the plan should be amended to incorporate the goals of historic preservation set forth herein.

The present historic district ordinance should be amended in several aspects also. The accompanying suggestions have expanded the Board's duties and obligations, to increase the Board's expertise and clarify its duties regarding public responsibility and enforcement of local zoning, as well as compliance with civil rights laws.

Guidelines are suggested to clarify actions taken by the Board. Recommendations for criteria regarding the designation of historic districts and individual landmarks are also explained. Design review decisions for certificates of appropriateness also need to be made according to established standards; more specificity is proposed. In addition, the sign guidelines should be made more specific as suggested and adopted to fill gaps in the existing ordinance.

A. The Comprehensive Plan.

The existing comprehensive plan sets out broad guidelines for historic preservation but should be expanded to provide more directional guidance for enactment and implementation of the historic district ordinance. The plan also does not integrate historic preservation with other public goals.

Therefore, the CDB plan should be amended integrating a historic district aspect with the existing plan. Urban design goals are needed; the historic district should be part of the "unified scheme" which is already identified as the CDB's main problem. Urban design goals should specifically include maintaining the historic character present in Culpeper while allowing for and encouraging economic development.

The "small town, friendly atmosphere and rural setting" of Culpeper are already identified as valuable assets; the plan should clearly identify these assets and their relation to historic preservation.

B. Historic and Cultural Conservation Board.

The existing Historic Cultural District Ordinance sets out satisfactory procedures for creating and operating Culpeper's historical and cultural conservation board. It is suggested, however, that if possible that its members should include an architect, a historian, a real estate expert and an attorney.

Enforcement has been identified as a problem area. The board should be instructed as to its duties and obligations under the historic district law, and concentrate upon enforcing the ordinance either persuasively or coercively.

It is also recommended that the board work with local neighborhood and civic organizations in formulating programs and informing them about the goals and purposes of historic preservation in Culpeper. Also, the board should apprise itself of available information services regarding

architectural, economic and tax issues and make such information available to interested citizens.

In addition to fulfilling the duties and obligations under the historic district ordinance, the board shall obey and take account of equal employment, public accommodation and other civil rights laws. The board shall take account of the impact of its decisions on the minority groups of Culpeper.

C. Guidelines of District and Site Designation.

The present ordinance provides no specific standards for evaluation of districts or individual properties for designation as an historic district or site. Without standards at least specific enough to define the operative criteria for Board designation, their action may appear too arbitrary or ad hoc. At the same time, standards should be general enough to allow for ample consideration of non-quantifiable and amorphous factors. The National Register criteria for evaluation should be used as a general source in this area.

D. Certificate of Appropriateness.

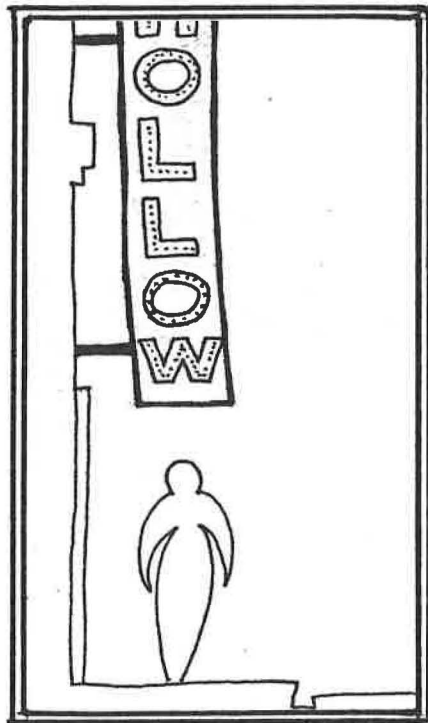
To aid the board in evaluating certificates of appropriateness, it is suggested that the ordinance be amended to include additional specific criteria, suggested in the appendix.

E. Sign Ordinance

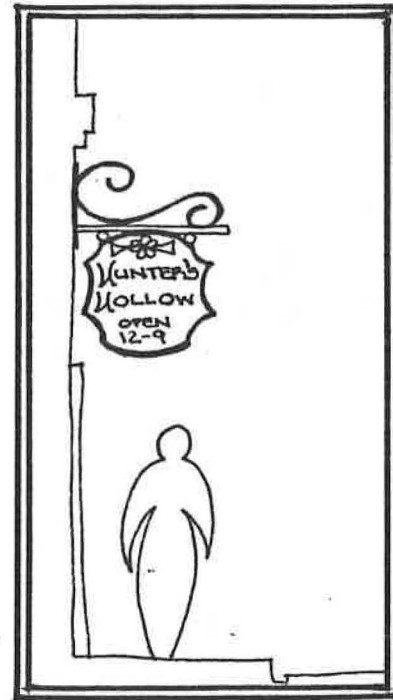
The existing sign ordinance is a fairly detailed and well-drafted guide to permissible signs in the commercial historic district. It is suggested that the sign ordinance be incorporated as an extension of the Historical Cultural District Legislation. Also several gaps in the existing legislation should be filled as suggested in the appendix. If laws become too detailed and restrictive they risk inhibiting the unique and creative character of

Culpeper's signs which give interest and texture to downtown Culpeper, therefore the proposed revisions seek to retain flexibility in approving proposed signs.

Effective enforcement of the existing Culpeper Historic District Sign Guidelines appears to be a problem. Strict enforcement is costly and may antagonize individuals who are adversely affected. Educational efforts as to the value of compliance with the ordinance should be directed towards commercial property owners not only to encourage compliance, but also as a valuable public relations tool. (See educational goals).



DON'T



DO

FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The final section of the plan contains a framework for implementation or a "what next?" agenda. Three specific proposals are discussed and are followed by an outline of suggested roles and responsibilities for local officials and organizations interested in preservation.

A. Task Force.

The success of this plan will depend upon stimulating the interest of the townspeople of Culpeper and a commitment from town officials toward historic preservation activities. With these objectives in mind, it is recommended that the Town Council appoint a task force on historic preservation composed of business people, developers, residents and at least one member of each of the following groups: Downtown Association, local neighborhood associations, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Culpeper Historical Society. The role of this group would be to formulate public policy (hopefully based on the suggestions found in this plan), advocate preservation and generally assist in the promotion of the historic districts. This group should serve for a limited period of time. It is hoped that the activities and interest promoted by this task force will be the basis for an ongoing preservation organization in Culpeper.

B. Technical Advisor.

The second recommendation for facilitating the implementation of an historic preservation plan for Culpeper is for the town to employ a part or full time technical preservation advisor who can act as an advisor to residents, investors, business people and developers on preservation decisions. Student interns, retained consultants, or other professionals could fulfill this capacity. This person would administer any economic programs

for preservation that the town might implement such as a revolving loan fund in cooperation with local banks; work with the state historic landmarks commission in coordinating grant applications for local residents or business people; provide information on the eligibility requirements and standards for federal historic tax credits, etc.

C. Non-Profit Preservation Organization.

These duties could be carried out through a local non-profit preservation organization or a committee of the Downtown Association if there is sufficient interest among local residents to undertake these tasks. Another possibility for obtaining technical preservation support for Culpeper is for the town to become a part of the Main Street program sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Main Street program local manager would assume the duties of technical and economic advisor for preservation activities.

D. Responsibilities.

Town officials, town staff and interested local organizations in Culpeper should also have specific roles in implementing the historic preservation plan. The following responsibilities have been outlined to strengthen the existing roles in preservation activity.

Town Planner

- o Act as a community liason between preservation and other activities.
- o Act as a clearing house for technical information until this role is fulfilled by someone else. This would entail providing a library of preservation reference material and technical information; advising property owners for Certificates of Appropriateness and Investment Tax Credits; and preparing grant applications for preservation projects.

- o Act as staff to the HCCB and the proposed Task Force on Historic Preservation.
- o Administer historic district ordinance.

HCCB

- o Review the historic district ordinance and recommend amendments or additions to the Town Council for approval.
- o Review the Culpeper Historic Preservation Plan and Survey. Amend and/or adopt these documents as guidelines.
- o Examine the preservation activities of similar towns in Virginia, such as Portsmouth, Staunton, Leesburg and Warrenton for future reference.

Town Council

- o Appoint a Task Force on Historic Preservation.
- o Approve amendments or additions to strengthen the historic district ordinance.
- o Retain a technical advisor for preservation activity and administrator of economic programs relating to preservation.
- o Review and adopt the Historic Preservation Plan.

Culpeper Historical Society, Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce, Churches and Civic Groups.

- o Promote preservation activity and preservation education.

A separate book of appendices containing additional information on topics mentioned in the plan, including educational materials, architectural design references, preservation economics literature, and suggested amendments to local preservation ordinances and plans can be reviewed in

**the Office of Planning and Community Development at 118 W. Davis Street,
Culpeper.**