



**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
for
February 17, 2011**

APPLICATION: HDC2011-00526

ADDRESS: Multiple addresses

ACCEPTED: February 1, 2011

OWNER: Multiple owners

REQUEST: Recommendation for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for the Rockville Park subdivision

STAFF: Robin D. Ziek



View at Reading Ave. and Maple Ave.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

A nomination to list the Rockville Park subdivision in the National Register of Historic Places was submitted to the State Historic Preservation office (SHPO) in October of 2010. Rockville Park has local significance as an example of 19th century suburban development that followed the development of the railroad (see Attachment A). The process of listing properties in the National Register is conducted by the SHPO, which in Maryland is the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). Once a nomination is received, MHT schedules a review with the State's Governor's Consulting Committee (GCC) and, concurrently, asks the City to hold a Public Hearing with the Historic District Commission, and send in a recommendation from the Mayor and Council. Owners are asked to send their comments directly to MHT.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

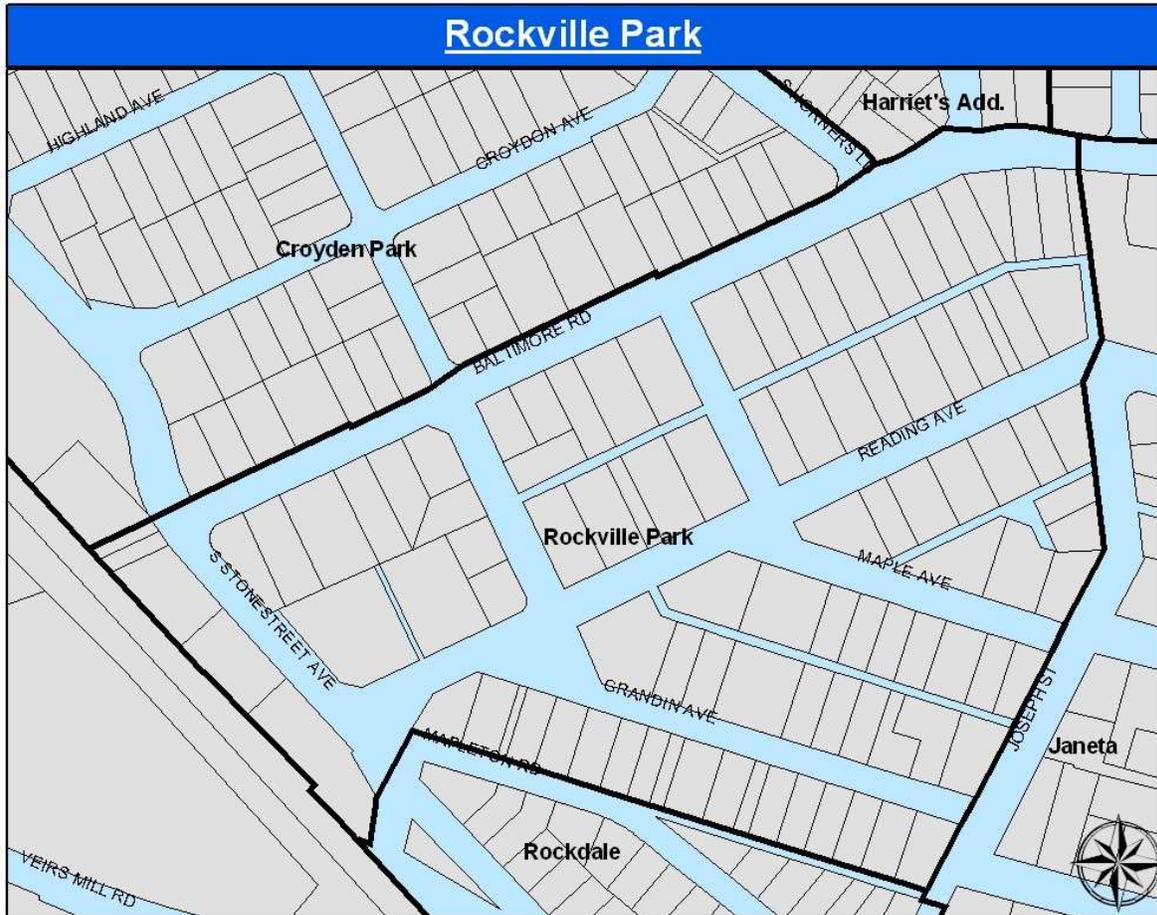
Staff recommends the following findings:

The Rockville Park subdivision meets Criteria A (Events), B (Persons), C (Architecture) for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The neighborhood retains the essential physical features that characterized the late 19th century residential subdivision, with its streets and alleys. The slow pace of construction resulted in a subdivision notable for its open landscape, angled streets and a variety of house types. The platting of the subdivision was part of the effort to build suburban communities near Washington D.C., and was undertaken

by regional developers who took advantage of the accessibility provided by the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad line.

[DRAFT MOTION OF EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE:]

Finding HDC2011-00526, for Evaluation of Historic Significance for listing Rockville Park in the National Register of Historic Places, as eligible for listing under Criteria A, B and C, I move to recommend National Register listing for the proposed Rockville Park National Register Historic District.



BACKGROUND:

National Register Process

The Mayor and Council directed staff to submit the nomination for the Rockville Park subdivision for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on October 11, 2010. Listing in the National Register is an honor reserved for properties that demonstrate historical significance at the national, state and/or local levels. The Rockville Park subdivision is being nominated for its local significance, as a local representation of a national trend: 19th century suburban development that followed transportation improvements (see Attachment A).

The Rockville Park subdivision is bounded on the north by Baltimore Road; on the east by Joseph Street; on the south by Mapleton Road and/or the alley between Mapleton Road and Joseph Street; and on the west by the Metro railroad tracks (see map above, page 2).

A letter was sent to all property owners that included information provided by the state on benefits of listing in the National Register. This includes state and federal tax credit programs to assist with property maintenance (see Attachment B). The process of listing properties in the National Register is conducted by the SHPO. Once a property is nominated, SHPO staff will schedule a review with the State’s Governor’s Consulting Committee (GCC) and, concurrently, ask the City to hold a Public Hearing with the Historic District Commission. The Mayor and Council are also asked to provide a recommendation to the State, and this recommendation is sent to SHPO staff. The nomination is then forwarded by the State to the National Park Service for NPS review unless 1) both the HDC and the Mayor and Council recommend against listing; and/or 2) at least 51% of the property owners recommend against listing.



Reading Avenue, looking East



Grandin Avenue, looking Southeast

City Review

The City's 1986 *Historic Resources Management Plan* identified Rockville Park, along with other 19th and early 20th century subdivisions, as historically significant (p. 127-129), and recommended that it be inventoried (p.132). The subdivision was found *eligible* for listing in 2001 with information submitted by the State Highway Administration. Citywide survey data collected in 2002-2004 indicated that Rockville Park retained significant historic characteristics and could be considered either for a local historic district, or for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Through the planning process undertaken to produce the *East Rockville Neighborhood Plan* (2004), the community indicated a lack of support for a multi-site local historic district but did support listing in the National Register. The National Register nomination, undertaken by historic preservation staff, is the outcome of that survey and planning process.

The City held informational meetings for affected property owners in the Fall of 2010, culminating with the Mayor and Council directing staff to submit this nomination to the State for consideration. Because Rockville is a Certified Local Government (CLG), the State process includes a requirement for a formal Public Hearing to be conducted by the HDC. The Mayor and Council are also asked to provide a formal recommendation (scheduled for March 7, 2011).

The SHPO holds a separate meeting with the Governor's Consulting Committee (GCC), to ask for their recommendation on the proposed listing. The GCC consists of historic preservation professionals appointed by the Governor to provide guidance to the State on National Register nominations. This meeting is distinct from the City review, and is currently set for February 22, 2011. Historic preservation staff will attend to hear the proceedings.

SHPPO staff will organize all three recommendations, as well as collect any correspondence on this proposal. This material will be sent to the National Park Service, which administers the federal National Register program. If the HDC and the M&C both recommend against listing, the nomination will not be forwarded to the National Park Service (NPS). In addition, if 51% of the property owners disagree with the listing, the nomination will not go forward.



Baltimore Road, looking West



Baltimore Road, looking southeast

Number of Structures: 91 (59 Contributing – constructed before 1960;
32 Noncontributing (constructed after 1960).

Zone: Predominantly R-60; MXB (adjacent to railroad); MXC (one property)

City of Rockville Permits Required:

Listing in the National Register is an honor that provides tax credit opportunities for contributing properties. It is different from a local historic designation in that neither the HDC, nor any other body, has approval authority over proposed alterations within the National Register district. The County's historic property tax credit program (10%) does not apply to properties that are solely listed in the National Register. The City encourages, but does not require, a Courtesy Review by the HDC of proposals for new construction within or adjacent to National Register Historic Districts in an effort to protect the character of the historic district.

Benefits of listing in the National Register:

State Tax Credit (20% of costs credited against state income tax owed) for approved interior and exterior work, managed by the Maryland Historical Trust; applies to residential and commercial properties; and

Federal Tax Credit (20% of costs credited against federal income tax owed) for approved interior and exterior work, managed by the MHT and the National Park Service, applies only to commercial properties; and

Federal and State 106 Review: Review of effect of all projects that include state or federal funding on properties listed in the National Register, with a view to minimize adverse impacts. [N.B.: Properties that are *eligible* for listing also receive 106 review, and therefore, Rockville Park already qualifies for this review.]

National Register Criteria

A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our History.

Rockville Park is associated with late 19th century suburban development. This is associated both with the development of public transportation (railroads, etc) and with the reduction in property costs that opened up the home ownership market to the emerging middle class population.

B. Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

The developers of Rockville Park, and others active in Rockville in late 19th century were associated the District of Columbia and other suburban developments in the region, and particularly for communities developed along the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad.

C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

The houses in Rockville Park provide a coherent view of a late 19th century suburban development, with the added feature that the subdivision filled in over time. This has resulted in a community with an open landscape but with contributing examples of architectural styles from 1885 – 1960.¹

ATTACHMENTS:

- A National Register nomination
- B Letter to Property Owners, including Benefits of Listing and Criteria for Listing
- C. MHT/CLG National Register Recommendation Form

¹ Properties that post date 1960 are not included as contributing resources because the National Register will not list properties less than 50 years old unless they are of exceptional importance.