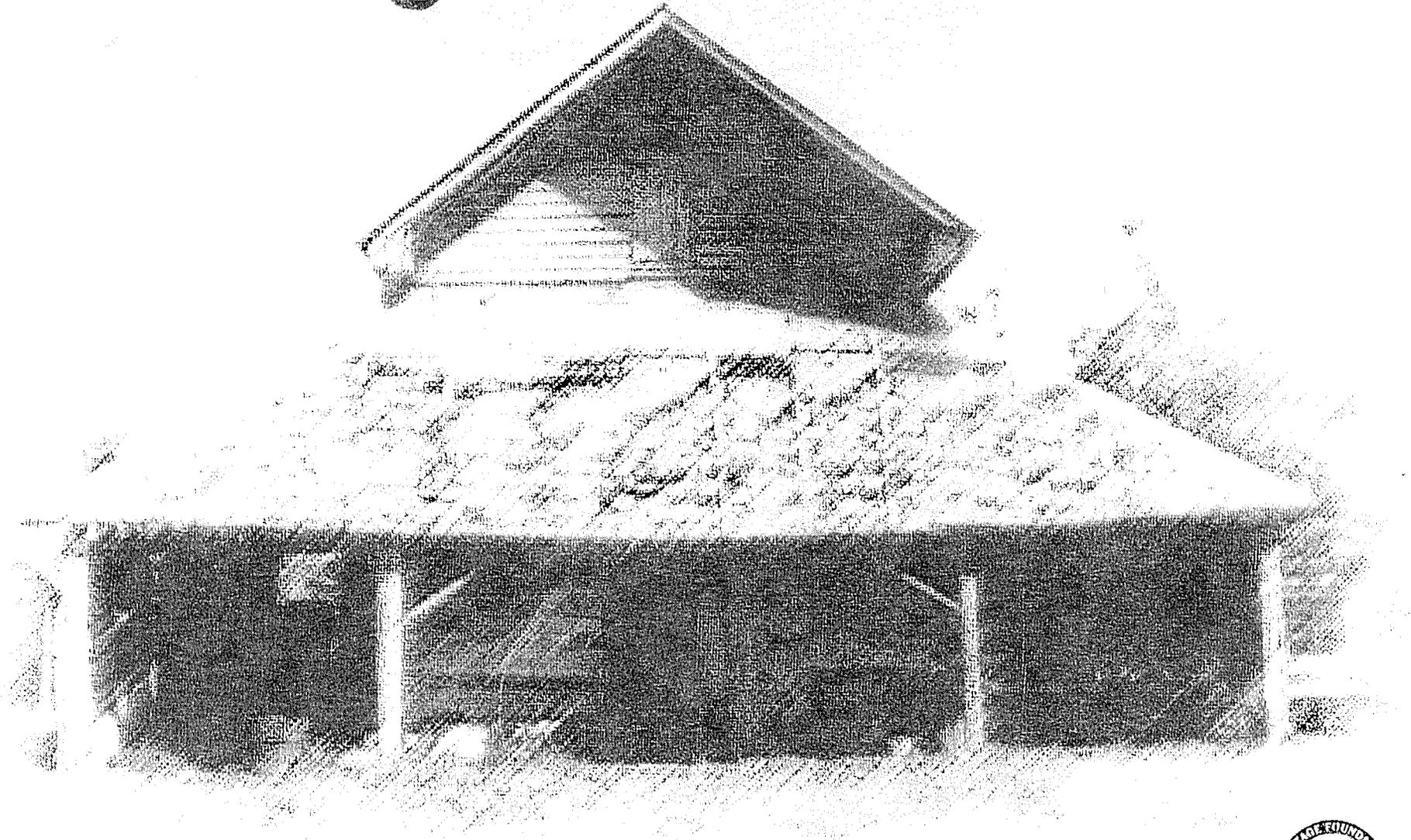


# Saving the Farmstead



A Publication of the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County





# Preface

Franklin and Williamson County are presently experiencing unprecedented growth that continuously threatens the integrity of historic buildings and their rural settings. While it is becoming more common that such buildings are preserved as part of a new development site, the sensitive integration of new development with historic buildings is still uncommon. The purpose of this booklet is to provide direction to the local governments, preservationists, land owners and developers in preserving historic buildings and landscapes in a more meaningful way when faced with new development.

*Much as the family bible and old photo albums record family histories, America's rural countryside provides a living record of our collective past...These landscapes of heritage were formed by the activities and habits of past generations, and to the careful observer they offer a glimpse of long-forgotten lifestyles and traditions.*

from Views From the Road, by David H. Copps

# Contents

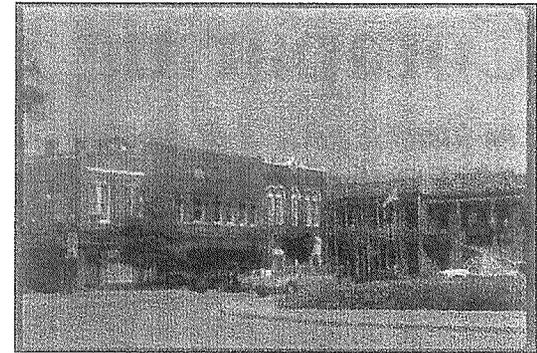
<b>Community Character</b>	1
<b>Comparing Development Patterns: Historic vs Contemporary</b>	2
<b>The Conflict: When Historic &amp; Contemporary Collide</b>	6
<b>Alternative Approaches</b>	10
Alternative 1: Buffer from incompatible development.	10
Alternative 2: Use cluster development.	11
Alternative 3: Integrate with compatible development.	12
Alternative 4: The status quo - failed attempts to buffer & integrate.	13
<b>Solutions: Design Guidelines</b>	14
Option 1: The Buffering Approach	16
Option 2: The Integrating Approach	22
<b>Preferred Solutions</b>	27
A Hypothetical Case Study: The Centennial Hall Site	27
Scenario A: Based on Current Regulations	28
Scenario B: Buffering Alternative	29
Scenario C: Integrating Alternative	30
<b>The Future?</b>	31

# Community Character

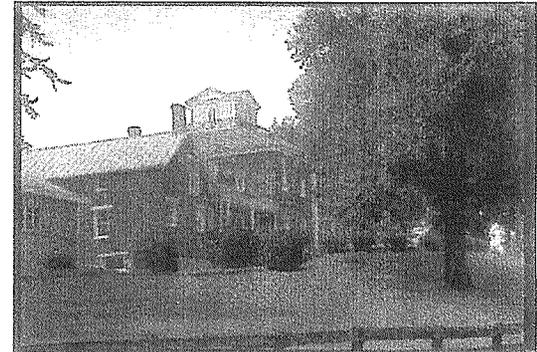
*Franklin and Williamson County offer an unmatched character — a vibrant historic downtown, stately antebellum mansions, quaint cross-roads communities, and a pastoral rolling countryside. Most representative of this identity is the historic home in its rural landscape.*



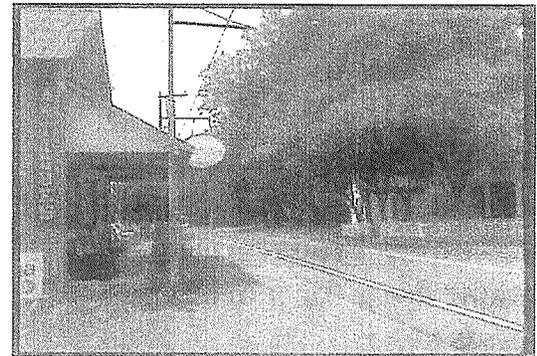
In addition to Franklin's National Register districts, there are 120 individual National Register sites throughout Williamson County.



Franklin has received national recognition for having a vibrant and well-preserved downtown.



Franklin is blessed with an outstanding collection of antebellum homes.

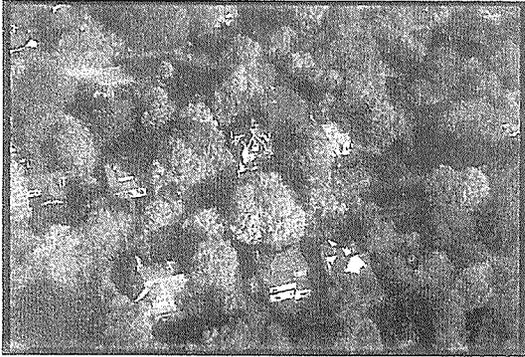


Quaint communities, such as Leipers Fork, have developed over the past two hundred years at country crossroads.

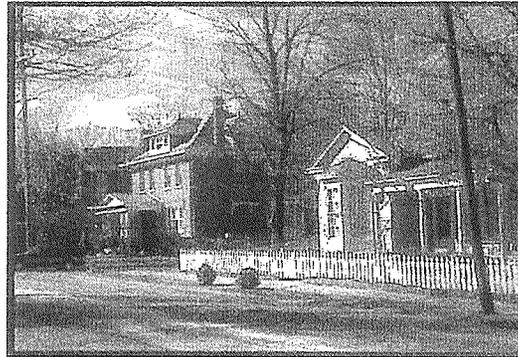
# Comparing Development Patterns

*The historic pattern of development for Williamson County is characterized by pastoral land and homes punctuated by crossroads communities. Older communities typically feature a modified grid street system, relatively high densities, human-scaled buildings, walkable streetscapes, and the compatible integration of different land uses.*

## Historic Development



This aerial view of Historic Franklin reveals an interconnected street pattern and relatively small lots.



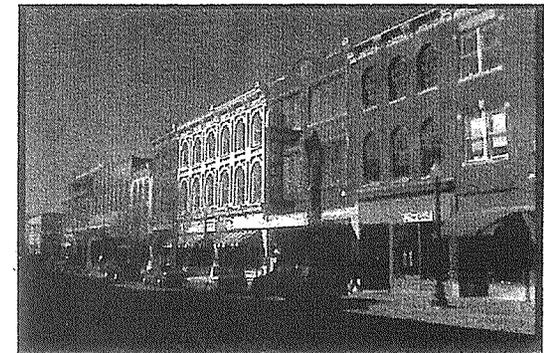
The Hincheyville Historic District features pleasant streetscapes and houses with shallow front setbacks.

**Franklin's pre-WWII neighborhoods, with their pedestrian-friendly streets, embody the imagery of small town living in a largely rural county.**

**Though once commonplace in America, the unique character of downtown Franklin is now a major draw for tourists and locals alike.**

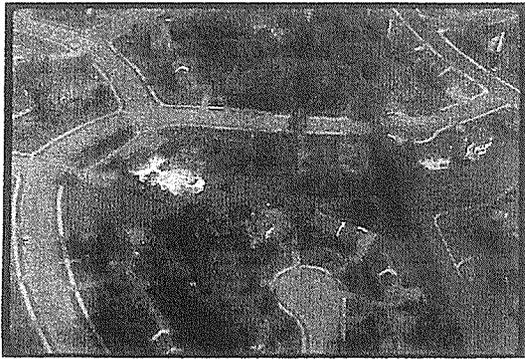


Franklin's historic commercial and institutional development features human-scaled buildings which front directly onto the street, with parking lots in the rear.

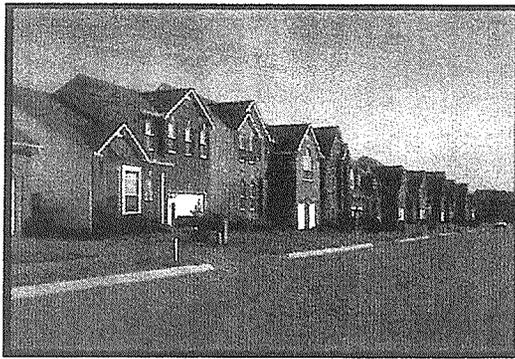


*In contrast to its historic development, the area's contemporary development patterns feature curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs, automobile-oriented buildings and streetscapes, few street trees, lower densities, and the segregation of different land uses.*

## Contemporary Development



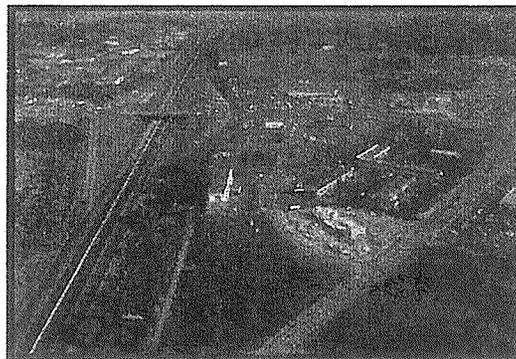
Williamson County's contemporary suburban development features wide roads and cul-de-sacs with few street trees.



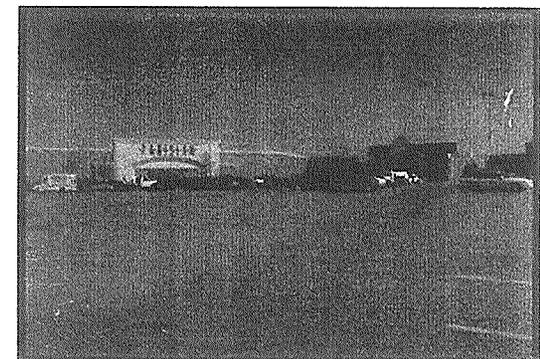
The appearance of these new homes dominated by garage doors relates no more to Franklin, Tennessee than it does to Anyplace, USA.

**Contemporary residential development on rural landscapes continues to dilute the character that attracted most people to Williamson County in the first place.**

**Unlike historic commercial development, which accommodates both pedestrians and cars, this environment only accommodates cars.**



Williamson County's contemporary commercial development consists of large one-story buildings fronted by expansive parking lots.



Unlike Franklin's historic downtown, this is not an environment where shoppers linger to enjoy their surroundings.

## Historic Development



Because of the scale and design characteristics of historic Franklin, contrasting land uses such as offices, retail and residences can peacefully co-exist side by side.

**Historic development patterns allow citizens to live, work, shop and play within a tight-knit community without total dependence upon the automobile.**

## Contemporary Development

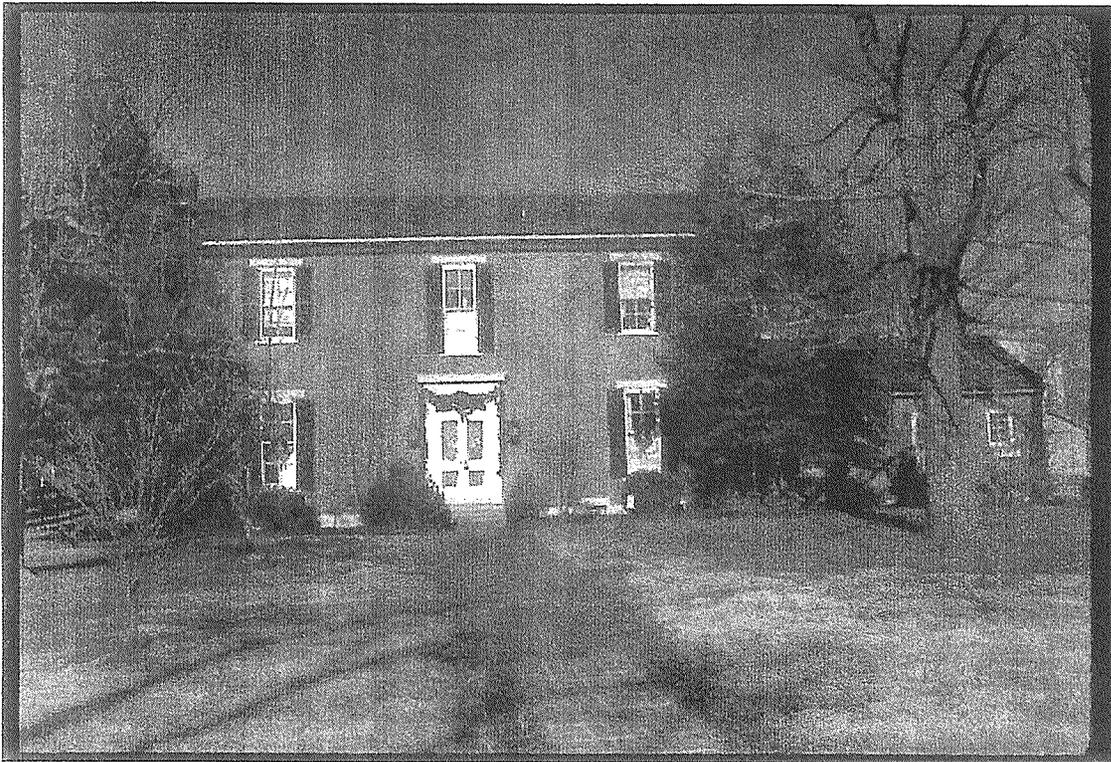


Because of the form in which contemporary development is typically delivered, differing land uses must be "buffered" from one another as if quarantined.

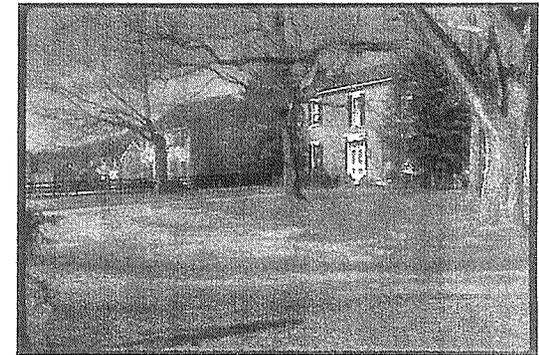
**In stark contrast is the segregated world of most contemporary development. The land uses are the same - it is the relationship between them that has changed.**

# The Conflict: When Historic & Contemporary Collide

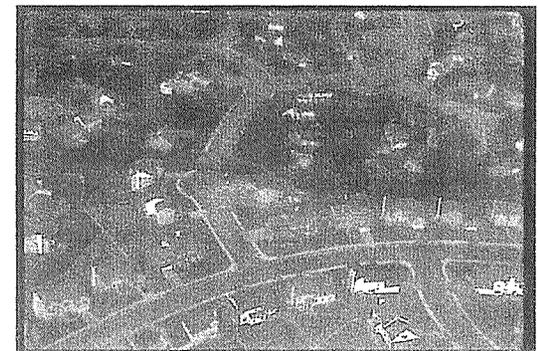
*The unique character of Franklin and Williamson County is eroded daily by a pattern of generic suburban sprawl that is foreign to both the classical urban form of Downtown Franklin and the rural qualities of the surviving farmland. One of the most regrettable outcomes is the loss of integrity for historic buildings and their rural landscapes.*



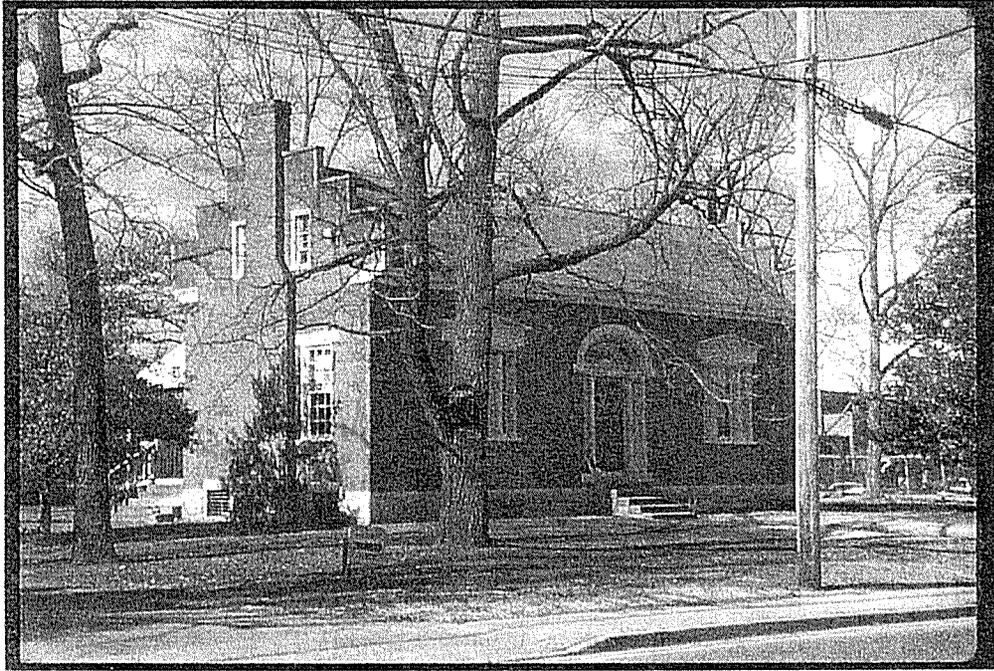
Viewed in isolation, the antebellum home known as Rebel's Rest enjoys the dignity it deserves.



Viewed from the street of a conventional suburban development, Rebel's Rest becomes just another house.



Viewed from the air, Rebel's Rest is lost in a sea of incompatible development.



The Carter House site — the scene of General Hood's attack on November 30, 1864.

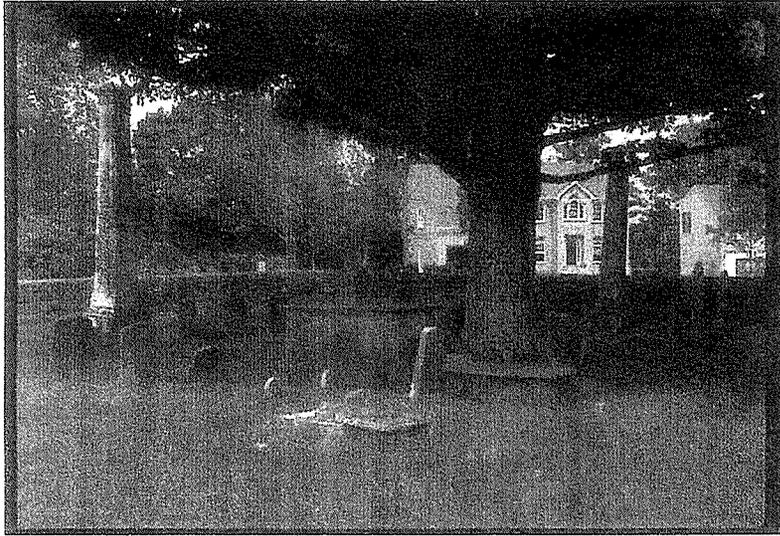
*"Our regiment was resting in the gap of a range of hills in plain view of the city of Franklin. We could see the battleflags of the enemy waving in the breeze."*

Private Sam Watkins

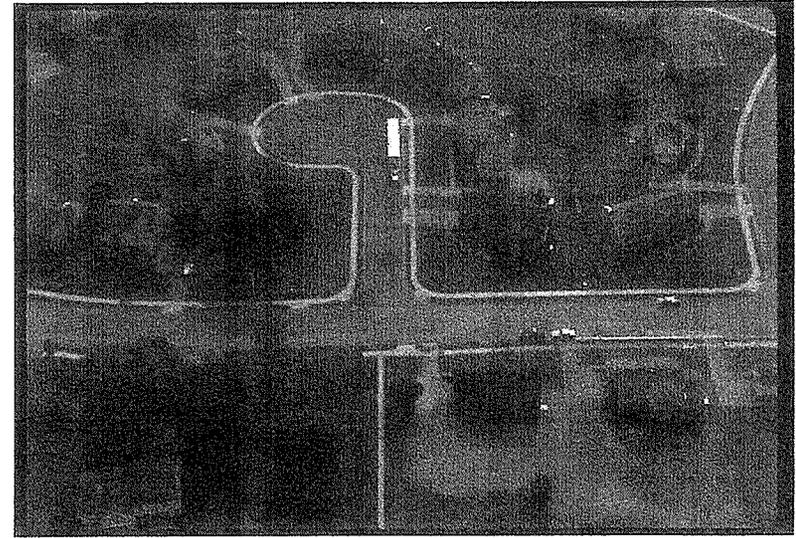
- 1st Tennessee Regiment, Army of Tennessee



The Carter House context — the scene of strip commercial development in 1997.

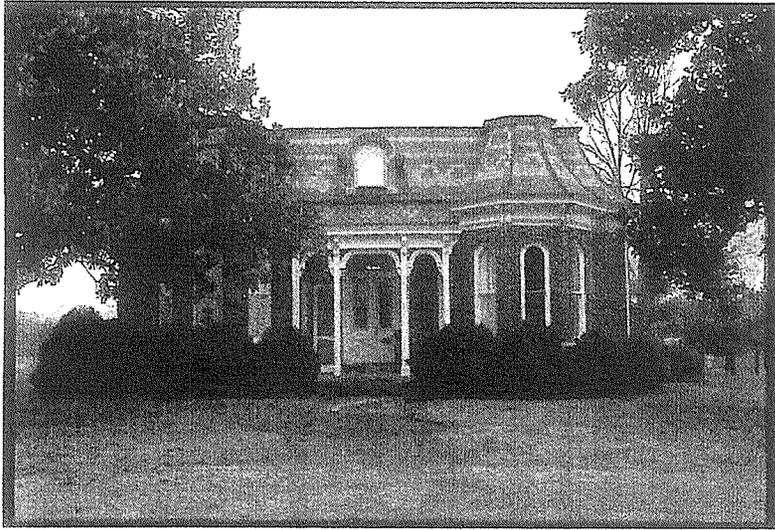


The final resting place of Abram Maury, the founder of Franklin who laid out the well-conceived town plan. The accompanying historic farm house no longer stands.

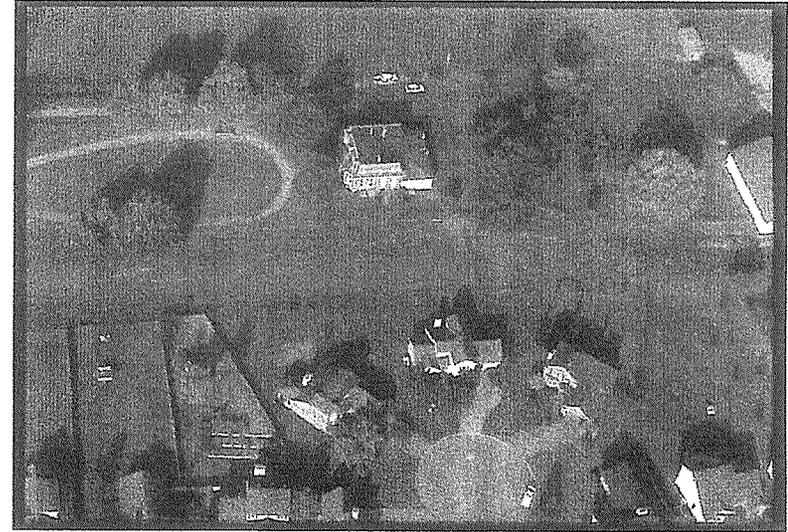


Cherished historic site or suburban sideyard? The historic cemetery, on the left corner of the cul-de-sac intersection, is a missed opportunity to create value for a new subdivision.

**Historic resources can be used as focal points for a new development. If properly treated, they can convey a highly-marketable sense of uniqueness and history and translate into pricing premiums for surrounding lots.**



The Rizer House, listed on the National Register, is a rare surviving example of a Second Empire building located outside of the historic town of Franklin.



Unbuffered suburban development directly adjacent to the Rizer House degrades its character and historic integrity.

**The rural setting, including outbuildings, can often be as important as the architectural merit of the main historic building.**

# Alternative Approaches

*Alternative approaches to accommodate new development while maintaining the integrity of historic rural buildings do indeed exist.*

## **Alternative 1: Buffer from incompatible development.**



Historic Carnton Plantation is a National Historic Landmark Civil War site associated with the Battle of Franklin.



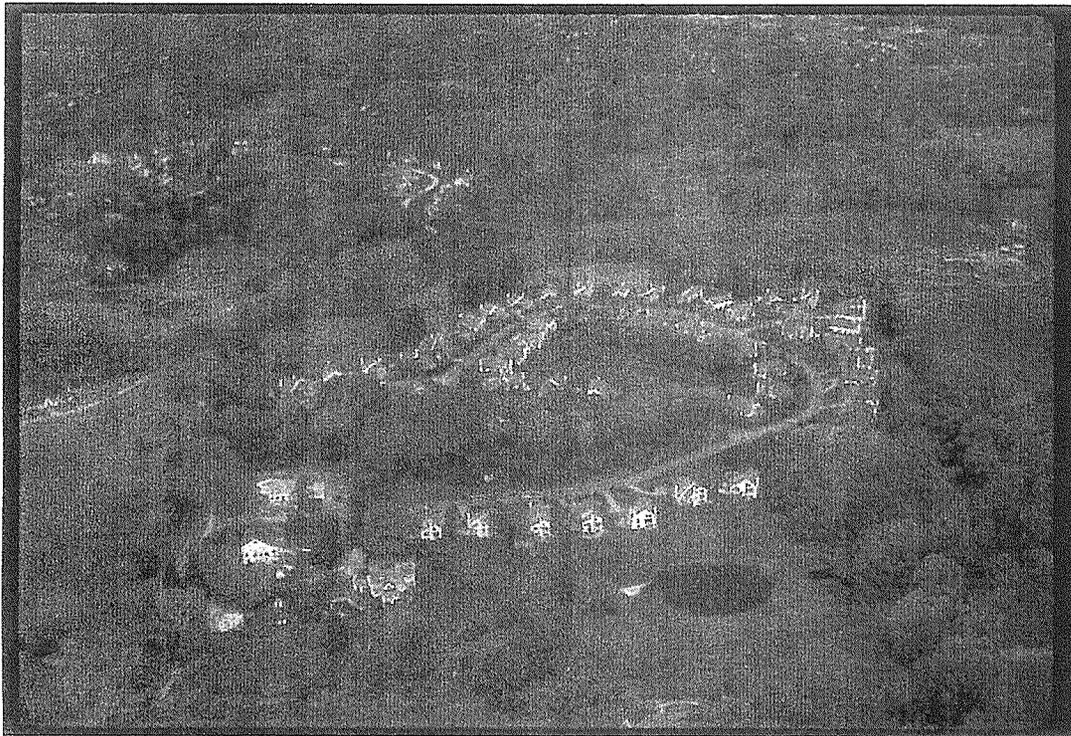
Expansive fields preserve the integrity of the plantation's historic home and outbuildings.



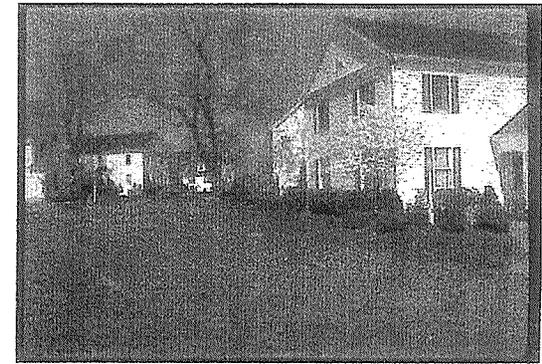
Despite nearby suburban development, dense vegetation has been maintained to buffer Historic Carnton Plantation.

## Alternative 2: Using cluster development.

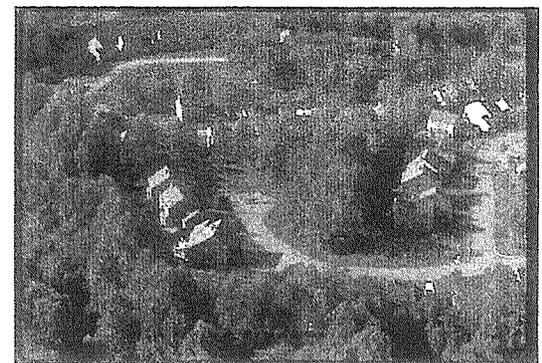
*Alternatives can be equitable to land owners, developers, and the public - they are practiced regularly in many other locales and they are easily achieved through public policy.*



Clustering is a variation of buffering which provides greater flexibility to preserve an historic building in its rural setting. In this photo, the historic farmhouse is in the bottom left corner.

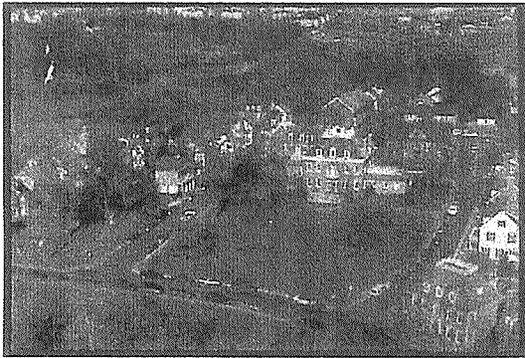


Development in cluster areas can sometimes be architecturally compatible with adjacent historical buildings.



Cluster development allows housing units the flexibility of fitting around existing natural landscape; this, in turn, helps soften the visual impact of development.

### Alternative 3: Integrate with compatible development.



The historic Kent Family home (on the left) has retained its dignity and prominence despite surrounding development.



Kentlands is a recent Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) in Gaithersburg, Maryland which uses the Kent Family home as a focal point.



Kentlands was designed using pre-WWII traditional town planning principles compatible with the Kent Family home's character. (Aerial photos courtesy of A. Nelessen Associates.)

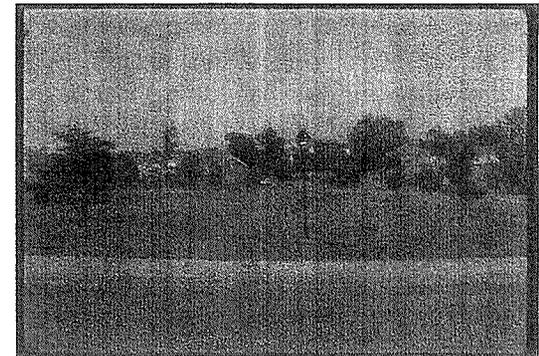
## Alternative 4: The status quo - failed attempts to buffer and integrate.



*Buffering?* Riverside is flanked on one side by insufficiently screened suburban houses and on the other by a newly-graded cul de sac awaiting pavement and new houses.



Riverside is considered to be the architectural "sister" to Carnton, but it is now part of a new suburban development.



*Integrating?* This green is surrounded by homes which lack design compatibility with Riverside, and one home turns its side to the green. It also features a conspicuously unscreened electrical box.

# Solutions: Design Guidelines

## What are design guidelines?

Design guidelines are a commonly-used tool for shaping the character of new development. They are most frequently used by local governments to implement the design standards of an "overlay zone", which does not effect the underlying "base zone" provisions related to permitted land uses and similar issues. Such design standards typically address building setbacks, heights, architectural forms, porches, building materials, site features and other design elements, and their most common application occurs in the form of an historic zoning district governed by a design review board. While design standards are often mandatory, they are sometimes voluntary and non-binding. In addition to the public sector's long-standing use of design guidelines, private developers are implementing such standards for new development at an increasing rate through legally-binding covenants and deed restrictions.

## The purpose of guidelines

The purpose of design guidelines is to provide direction for those involved in the development process, and it is up to Williamson County and its municipalities as to whether these will be adopted into public policy. In comparison with many other design guidelines, these are not as prescriptive because of the nature of rural settings. In establishing standards for infill development within an existing historic district, the design context allows for the development of prescriptive numeric standards based upon the existing design characteristics. For example, a street with an average building setback of 15 ft. and an average building height of two stories is not difficult to translate into design standards for new infill development. On the other hand, a farm field provides no such clear parameters, and variables such as topography, existing mature vegetation, the development program, and the design and significance of the historic buildings preclude the use of prescriptive standards. Consequently, it is the intent of this document to provide a set of design principles that flexibly accommodate the many potential variables. By applying these guidelines to the review of new development, the goal is that inappropriate design elements will be "red flagged" so that the errors of the recent past will not be repeated.

## Significance of the resource

A critical determinant of the level of consideration which should be given to a historic building in light of new development is the "significance" of the resource. Clearly, the greater the resource's significance the greater level of consideration that should be taken. For example, it would be acceptable for new development to come within relatively close proximity to many historic buildings so long as the new development is sympathetic to the historic building and its setting, and so long as it preserves the historic site's sense of prominence. On the other hand, there are at least a few historic buildings and settings of such significance that even the most sensitive new development would be inappropriate if located too close to the historic building, resulting in the need for an extensive buffer zone around the site (e.g., the Harrison Site — General Hood's headquarters during the Battle of Franklin). Historic resources listed on (or eligible for) the National Register of Historic Places should be given the greatest consideration. In addressing historic buildings, consideration should be given to the measures of significance summarized on the following page.

### *Design Guideline Options:*

*There are two primary options for protecting the integrity of an historic building and its rural setting:*

- 1) buffering the building and its setting from incompatible development*
- 2) carefully integrating new development through pre-WWII traditional town planning principles.*

## Measures of significance

The highest recognized level of significance is National Landmark status, followed by National Register designation or eligibility. These designations consider the following measures of significance:

### Age of the resource

Generally speaking, the older the resource the greater the consideration that should be given. For example, a pre-1900 structure should be given greater consideration than one dating between 1900 and 1945. Likewise, an antebellum (pre-1860s) structure should be given greater consideration than an 1880s building, and a surviving eighteenth-century structure should be given greater consideration than nineteenth-century buildings.

### Historic significance

Buildings associated with an important historical event or theme, such as the Civil War, should be considered to have greater significance than buildings without such an association.

### Architecture / craftsmanship

Historic structures which represent an important or unusual architectural style or level of craftsmanship should be considered especially significant. For example, the Rizer House on Del Rio Pike, one of the county's few examples of Second Empire architecture outside of the historic town of Franklin, should be given high consideration. Likewise, buildings which serve as good examples of the county's vernacular architecture should also be highly regarded.

### Existence of outbuildings

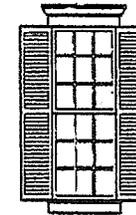
While it is not unusual for historic farm houses to survive for a century or two, the survival of their accompanying outbuildings is becoming a rarity. Therefore, historic homes with surviving outbuildings, such as barns, sheds, and smokehouses, should be given especially strong consideration.

### Condition / integrity

Buildings in good physical condition, and those that have retained their integrity by avoiding inappropriate alterations over time, should be given strong consideration.

### Contest

The quality of the historic resource's context is an important consideration. A pristine landscape increases the significance of the main resource, and examples of key elements may include fields, tree lines, and stone walls.



Architectural details courtesy of Looney Ricks  
Kiss Architects.

## Option 1: The Buffering Approach

Buffering is the concept of insulating a historic structure and setting through the use of spatial separation (“buffer zone”) and an edge treatment. While edge treatments might consist of complete visual screening, such an approach is not always necessary if site elements are used to define the setting around the historic building. Site elements commonly used for visual screening and/or delineation of the historic setting include landscaping, walls, fences, and topography.

### When to Use Buffering

The buffering approach is most appropriate when the proposed development has the following incompatible characteristics common to post-WWII development:

#### Incompatible Streets

- Wide streets
- Prevalent use of cul de sacs
- Streetscapes lack sidewalks and street trees

#### Incompatible Site Planning

- The development plan fails to preserve the prominence of the historic building in contrast to proposed nearby buildings
- Adjacent new roads are located in a manner that results in the historic building turning its side or rear to the new road
- The development plan physically encroaches into the historic setting to be preserved

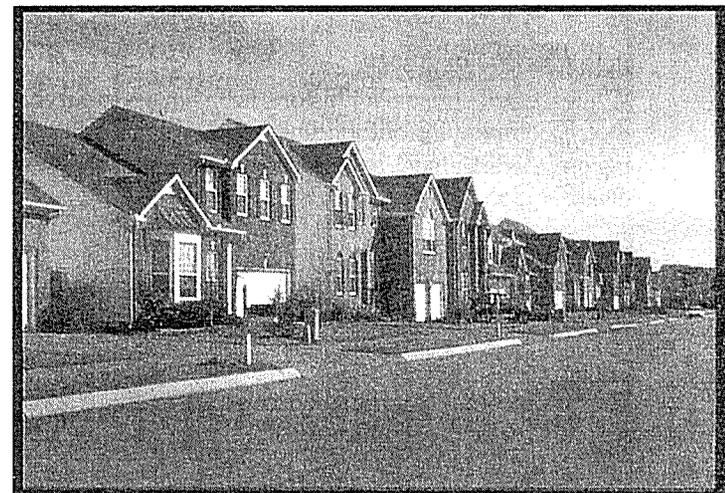
#### Incompatible Architecture

- Design elements of nearby new buildings are incompatible with the historic building with respect to scale, roof forms and pitch, architectural style, materials and colors
- Front facades are dominated by attached garages

Buffering can also be utilized in conjunction with cluster development. This buffering alternative is explained on page 20.



The type of development warranting sufficient buffering for historic buildings is shown here.

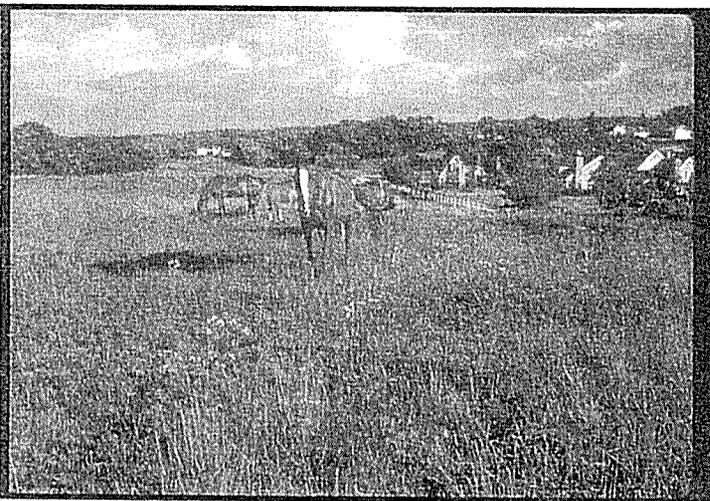
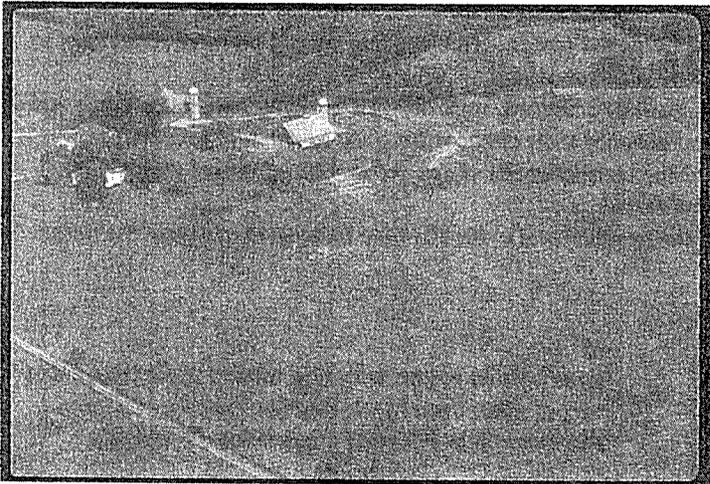


## Guidelines for Buffering

The two key elements which comprise the buffering approach to deal with incompatible development are the *buffer zone* and *peripheral edge treatment*. *Clustering* is another effective tool to achieve buffering.

### Buffer zone

The buffer zone is defined as that area of undeveloped land (or historically developed land) left in a natural state which surrounds the historic building. Under no circumstances should the required minimum buffer zone, in the case of adjacent incompatible development (per the page 16 criteria), be less than 10 acres. However, the exact amount of land area appropriate for the buffer zone around the historic building will depend upon certain variables.



### How to Determine the Buffer Size

- **Significance of the historic resource**  
This should be based upon the criteria for consideration as provided on page 15.
- **Degree of incompatibility of the proposed new development**  
The more incompatible the new development (per the features associated with incompatible development listed on page 16) the greater the need for buffering.
- **Characteristics of existing site features**  
Existing site features, both natural and historic man-made, can help emphasize the prominence of a historic building. Examples of natural features include topography, mature vegetation and streams. Historic man-made site features include walls and fences.
- **Sufficiency of the peripheral edge treatment**  
In most cases, the more substantial the peripheral edge treatment the less buffer zone needed. For example, a historic building that is separated from adjacent incompatible development by an extensive screen of solid evergreen trees may, in some cases, result in a minimum 10-acre buffer zone being acceptable, while a lesser screening may call for a larger buffer zone. The sufficiency of an existing or proposed edge treatment should be measured based upon the standards provided on the following pages.

A sense of space is achieved by the buffer zone shown in the two images to the left.

## Peripheral Edge Treatment

While the “buffer zone” refers to the land area between the historic building and the adjacent new development, “edge treatment” refers to the treatment applied to the area between the peripheral edge of the buffer zone and the edge of new incompatible development. When considering edge treatments, one of three approaches should be taken — *naturalistic screening*, *farm field boundary*, or *estate enclosure*, depending upon the situation.

### Naturalistic Screening

Naturalistic screening is typically appropriate for a site which already has an abundance of mature vegetation, as opposed to open farm fields. Sites which have relatively steep topography often fall into this category. Screening should create a year-round visual obstruction between the historic building and incompatible new development. Recommended minimum standards include:

- A double row of evergreen trees in which the rows are staggered so that trees overlap one another at maturity to create a solid screen.
- Tree spacing which, upon maturity, results in trees within each row creating a nearly solid visual screen. Tree spacing should be random and not in uniform rows.
- Landscaping of a sufficient height upon maturity that all inappropriate development is visually screened, regardless of building heights or topography.
- The use of species which are indigenous to the area to provide a natural appearance and enhance their chances for good health and longevity.
- More than one species of tree should be used for both a natural appearance and to avoid the consequences of species-specific diseases which might result in the complete loss of the screening. A minimum of three tree species is recommended.
- The maintenance of evergreen vegetation at the ground level (no pruning of trees near the ground level). Shrubs may be headed to create the necessary undergrowth.
- Contemporary man-made features, such as berms, may not be used for screening.



Although an opportunity was missed for an unspoiled access route from Mack Hatcher Parkway, Carnton Plantation was left with a naturalistic screening.

### Farm Field Boundary

The intent of this method of screening and/or area delineation is to replicate the tree-line boundaries historically prevalent throughout the county. Such boundaries are typically linear in form and dominated by deciduous trees. Also, they are usually informal — instead of being consciously planted in rows, they generally evolved as the “left over” vegetation that resulted once neighboring fields were cultivated for agriculture. Standards for this approach are as follows:

- Boundary areas should be linear in form.
- Boundary areas should be dominated by deciduous trees, although indigenous evergreens (e.g., cedars) may be included for diversity and visual screening purposes.
- Trees should not be planted in a perfect row, and spacing between trees should have some irregularity.
- Indigenous shrubs can be integrated into farm field boundaries.
- Historically-based fences (rail fences, board fences, etc.) and low dry-stacked stone walls may be included as part of the boundary. Stone walls should be consistent in design and stone-type with historic precedents found in the county.



This aerial view of Williamson County highlights the historic pattern of farm field boundaries.

### Estate Enclosure

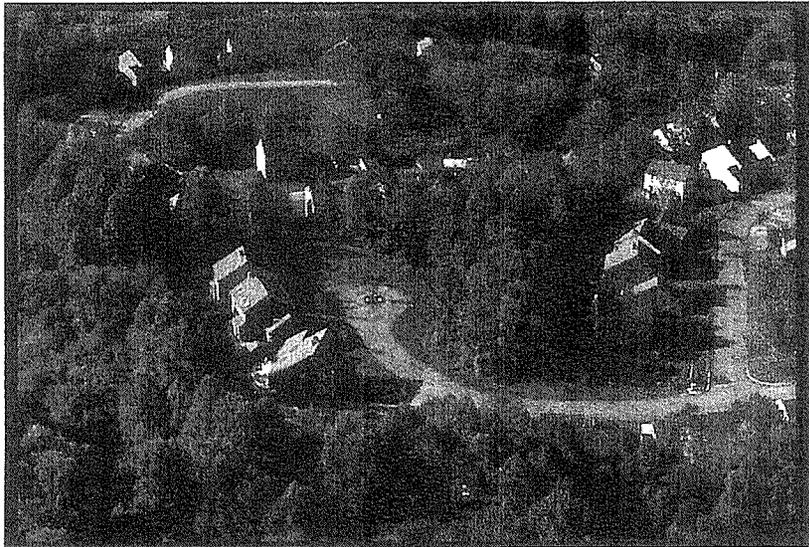
This approach to screening and area delineation can be used in similar situations as with the farm field boundary (open and relatively flat land), but lends itself more to situations in which the buffer zone, and perhaps the overall development site, is somewhat limited in land area. It is also more appropriate for historic buildings having classical architectural styling (e.g., federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, classic revival, etc.), as opposed to less formal vernacular styles (e.g., simple frame farm houses). Standards for the “estate enclosure” approach are as follows:

- Boundary areas should be linear in form.
- Boundary areas should be dominated by either deciduous trees or evergreens within any major segment of boundary area, but should not have an informal mixture of both.
- Trees should be planted in a row, and spacing between trees should have some regularity.
- While plant materials do not have to be indigenous to the area, they should be of a species historically available and capable of adapting to the local environment.
- Hedgerows may be used in place of trees or with trees. Fruit trees are also a very appropriate planting.
- Historically-based fences (board fences, picket fences, etc.) and brick or stone walls may be included as part of the boundary. Brick or stone walls should be consistent in design with historic precedents found in the county.



This example of an “estate enclosure” edge treatment features a formally-planted orchard on the right to screen out contemporary suburban development on the left.

## Cluster Development



Cluster development, a variation of the buffering approach, is an effective means of preserving open space near historic buildings.



New development "clusters" sacrifice lot sizes in return for more usable adjacent open space.

Cluster development is nodes of compact development which are predominantly residential, but sometimes integrated with small-scale non-residential uses. Clusters might consist of as few as three or as many as thirty buildings. Ideally, cluster development can have features compatible with historic buildings (e.g., narrow streets, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, architecture not dominated by attached front garages, etc.). Separating these hamlet-like clusters is undeveloped open space. Historically, hamlets in Williamson County have developed at rural cross-roads, such as the Leipers Fork community. Within the context of modern development, however, they will usually only occur if clear design guidelines are employed to direct such development patterns.

### Proximity of Clusters to the Historic Building

In those cases in which the development pattern of the cluster closely follows the more compatible historic pattern as previously described (and as specified on the following page under "When to Integrate New Development"), it is acceptable for clusters of new development to be relatively close to the historic building. On the other hand, clusters featuring incompatible characteristics should be further removed from the historic building with a buffer zone and possibly a peripheral edge treatment. Because of the many variables that come into play, it is not advisable to establish minimum distances of separation when clustering is used. However, in considering this issue, it is recommended that the same considerations listed on Page 16 ("When to Use Buffering") for the buffering approach be applied to the clustering approach.

## Option 2: The Integrating Approach

“Integrating” is the concept in which new development is allowed to come within relatively close proximity to a historic building in a manner that makes the historic building a meaningful element of the overall development site. Successful integration is accomplished when the nearby new development appears to have naturally evolved over time in a manner that is respectful to the historic building and maintains the historic building’s prominence within the new development.

### When to Integrate New Development

New development should only be permitted in close physical proximity of significant historic buildings when it has the following characteristics:

#### Compatible Streets

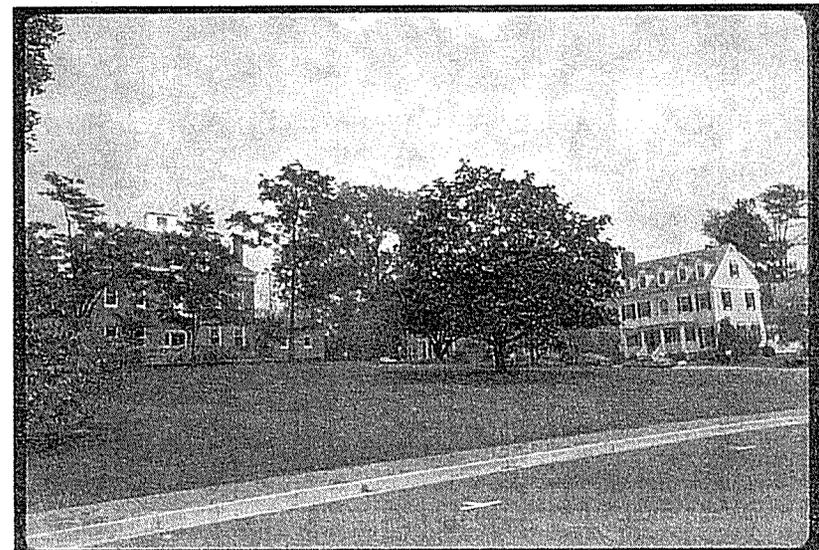
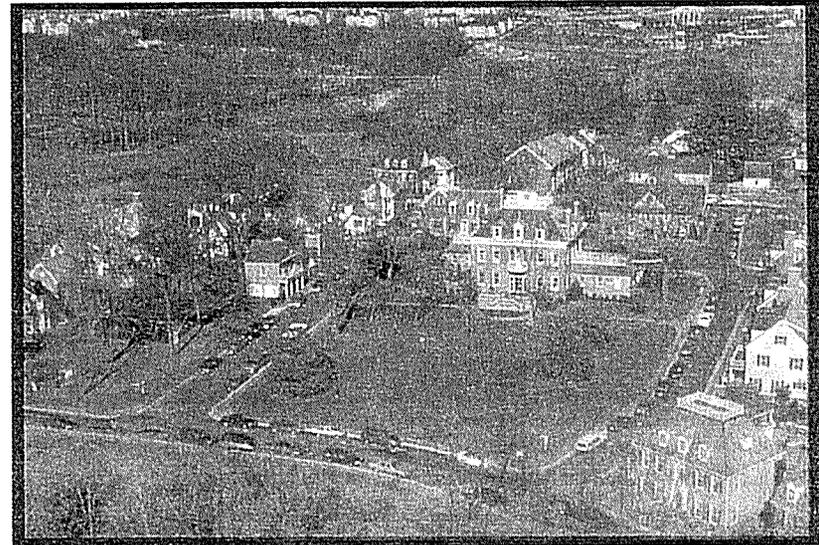
- Narrow streets
- Absence of cul de sacs
- Streetscapes have sidewalks and street trees

#### Compatible Site Planning

- The development plan clearly preserves the prominence of the subject historic building in contrast to nearby new buildings (see approaches to achieving this on the following page)
- Adjacent new roads are not located in a manner that results in the historic building turning its side or rear to the new road.
- The development plan does not physically encroach within the historic building’s immediate historic setting

#### Compatible Architecture

- Design elements of proposed nearby buildings are sympathetic to the historic building with respect to scale, roof forms and pitch, architectural style, materials and colors (see criteria for new buildings on page 23)
- Front facades are not dominated by attached garages



The Kentlands, in Gaithersburg, Maryland, is an excellent example of integrating new development. Two important goals are achieved: adjacent development uses pre-WWII planning principles, and the Kent Family home has retained prominence on the site.

## Guidelines for Integrating New Development

While buffering a historic building from incompatible development through the use of a buffer zone and peripheral edge treatment is a more straightforward approach, integrating new development near historic buildings requires painstaking care because the risk of adversely impacting the integrity of the historic building is substantially increased. New development has been successfully integrated with historic buildings when:

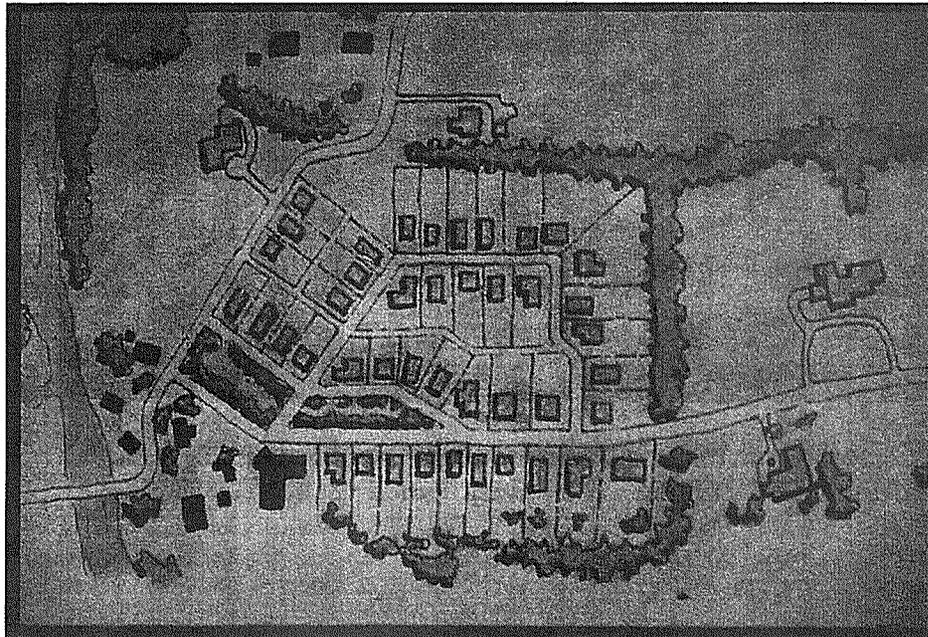
- It appears as if the balance of the site developed over time around the original historic building as part of a natural evolution, and
- The historic building benefits from a special site that allows it to serve as a focal point of the development.

To accomplish this result, the following standards should be followed:

### Retaining a Prominent Site for the Historic Building

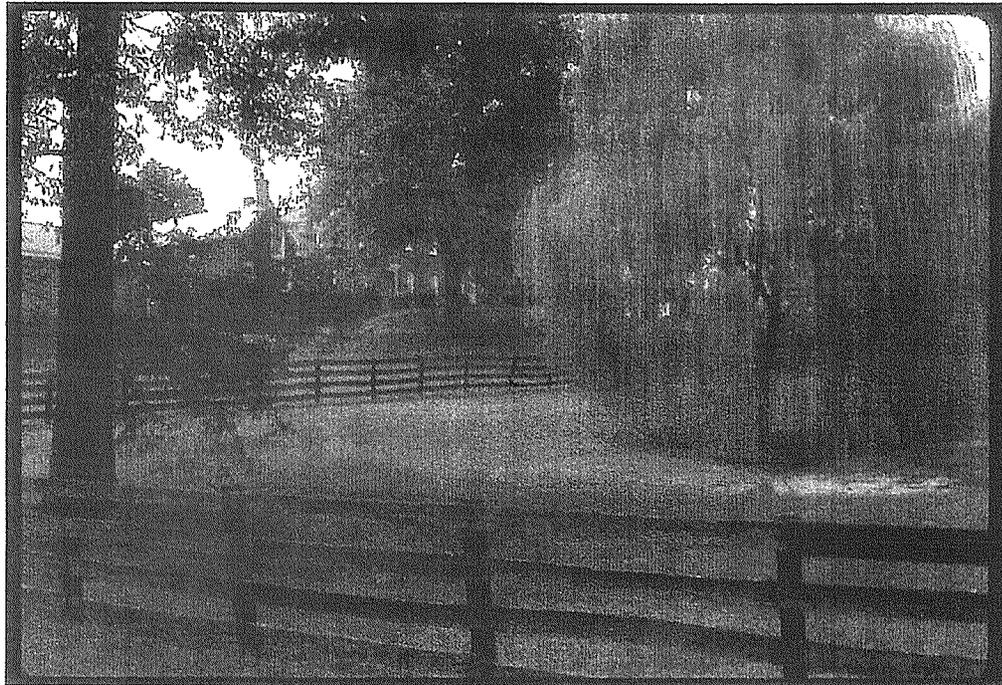
The historic building must be made a focal point through one or more of the following techniques:

- The historic building should either front onto a neighborhood green or square, or be located on a green or square:
  - The green/square should have a geometric shape that respects the topography.
  - The green/square should be bounded by a public ROW, preferably a public street, for at least 75% of its perimeter.
  - The green/square should be a minimum of 25,000 sq.ft. in area, preferably larger, if the historic building is located on it.
  - In those cases in which the historic building fronts onto a green/square (but is not located on the green/square), the historic building should be symmetrically centered on the green/square. Adjacent new buildings should be no closer to the historic building than a distance equal to twice the width of the front facade of the historic building.



Traditional development patterns feature interconnected street systems, buildings that relate to the street, and green spaces serving as civic focal points. In the above example from Bucks County, PA, several existing buildings and outbuildings (shown in black) have been incorporated with new homes.

- If not oriented toward a green or square, the historic building should be located in some alternative means for accomplishing visual prominence:
  - Located at an entry or destination location within the development.
  - Located at a corner location that terminates a vista as viewed down two or more streets. In such case, adjacent new buildings should be no closer to the historic building than a distance equal to twice the width of the front facade of the historic building.
  - Location of visual termination achieved through some other means.
  - Located on a lot that is substantially larger (100% or more) than the average nearby lot sizes in order to give the building prominence.
- Adjacent new roads may not be located in a manner that results in the historic building turning its side or rear to the new road.
  - An exception is when a road having equal or greater significance within the street hierarchy is also created / existing adjacent to the building's front facade (e.g., corner location).



Magnolia Hall on Highway 96 West is an example of a highly significant building and landscape which would warrant extreme care if adjacent development were ever proposed.

### Other Site Planning Considerations

Various site features, both natural and man-made, can also help emphasize the prominence of a historic building. Examples of natural features include topography, mature vegetation and streams. Man-made features include walls and fences that delineate the historic building from the balance of the development (suburban-type berming should never be used). The intention of using such site features in the “integrating” approach is not to buffer the historic building, as in the case of incompatible development, but rather to distinguish it from the balance of the site. In those cases in which nearby historic outbuildings exist, their inclusion within the preserved setting can also highlight the character of a historic farmstead.

### Design of New Buildings

New buildings within view of the subject historic building should be sympathetic in scale and architectural character with the historic building. However, the historic building should not be emulated to such an extent that it loses its prominence. Examples of design elements to be considered include:

- *Scale* - Rather than attempting to mirror the scale of the historic building, new buildings should generally be subordinate in their perceived scale to the historic building. This principle is not difficult to achieve in the case of stately antebellum mansions, but may be challenging and/or not feasible for more modest historic homes.
- *Roof pitch* - The roof pitch of new buildings should be close to that of the historic building (e.g., steeply-pitched historic roofs should be honored by steeply-pitched new roofs).
- *Roof forms, colors and textures* - Roofs come in a variety of forms — gable, gambrel, hipped, pyramidal, flat, shed, etc. The roofs of new buildings should relate to the nearby historic building (e.g., Mansard roofs should generally not be used outside of downtown Franklin). Consideration should also be given to colors and textures (e.g., a slate roofed historic building might be honored by an asphalt shingle that emulates slate in color and approximate thickness).
- *Ratio of solids to voids* - This principle, which would apply primarily to the main facade of new buildings, refers to the ratio of solid wall area to openings such as doors and windows (e.g., if the historic building’s facade has a 50:50 ratio of solids to voids, adjacent new buildings should feature a similar ratio).
- *Placement of openings* - In most cases, the doors and windows of historic buildings are symmetrically positioned and upper-floor and lower-floor openings are vertically aligned with one another. In such cases, nearby new buildings should reflect the same principles of symmetry and alignment.
- *Proportion of openings* - The proportion of doors and windows is measured in the ratio of height versus width. The proportion of openings can have a major impact on the character of a building, and the vast majority of historic buildings have openings with vertical proportions. Whether vertical, square or horizontal, the proportion of the historic building’s openings should be respected in the facade design of nearby new buildings (e.g., if windows and doors of the historic building have a height to width ratio of 2:1, openings of nearby new building facades should be similarly proportioned). Any major differences in the floor-to-ceiling heights of the historic building and proposed new buildings should be taken into account when considering the proportion of openings.
- *Architectural components* - Key architectural components of the historic building, such as porches, dormers, and arches, should be echoed by at least some of the nearby new buildings.
- *Materials and colors* - Materials of the historic building should be respected to some degree by their use on nearby new buildings. However, this principle must also be executed very carefully. Although there should be some relationship between the historic building and nearby new buildings with respect to materials and colors, too much imitation will cause the historic building to lose its prominence.

### Use of the Historic Building

If the design standards provided on the previous pages are successfully achieved, the historic building should retain enough prominence that its future use is not a significant issue. However, in those cases in which the building's prominence is particularly important, it is recommended that the building be used for purposes other than the primary use of nearby buildings. In the case of the most common scenario, a subdivision of detached single-family homes, the following alternative uses are recommended for consideration:

- restaurant
- lodging (e.g., inn or bed and breakfast)
- community center / club house
- conference center
- day care facility
- senior housing
- retail / office / mixed-use
- multi-family housing (e.g., condominiums or apartments)



The Governor's Club, a new residential development in Brentwood, will utilize an antebellum Greek Revival home as a facility for social events.



Special uses can add to the prominence of an historic building when new development is adjacently integrated.

# Preferred Solutions

*Implementing the recommended solutions to the current challenges will result in more responsible new development. By accommodating new development while protecting the integrity of historic rural buildings and their settings, Franklin and Williamson County can preserve its reputation as the jewel of Middle Tennessee.*



Centennial Hall was constructed in 1897 in Nashville for the state's Centennial Exposition. Moved to Williamson County after the exposition, it was placed on the National Register in 1988 and has since been restored as a home.



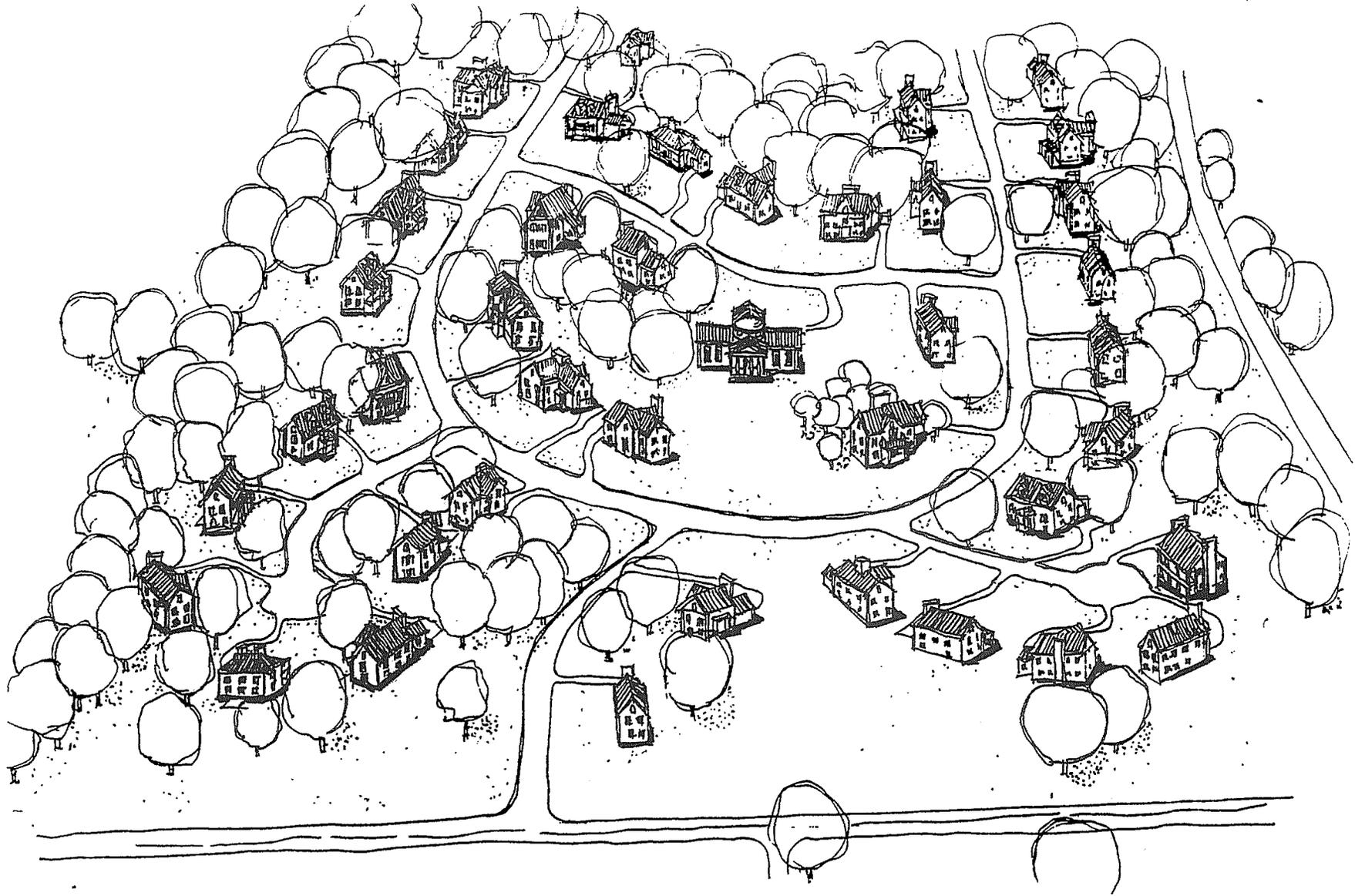
Centennial Hall was chosen as a case study because, like so many other properties in Franklin and Williamson County, it represents a historic building located on rural land having strong development potential.

## A Hypothetical Case Study: The Centennial Hall Site



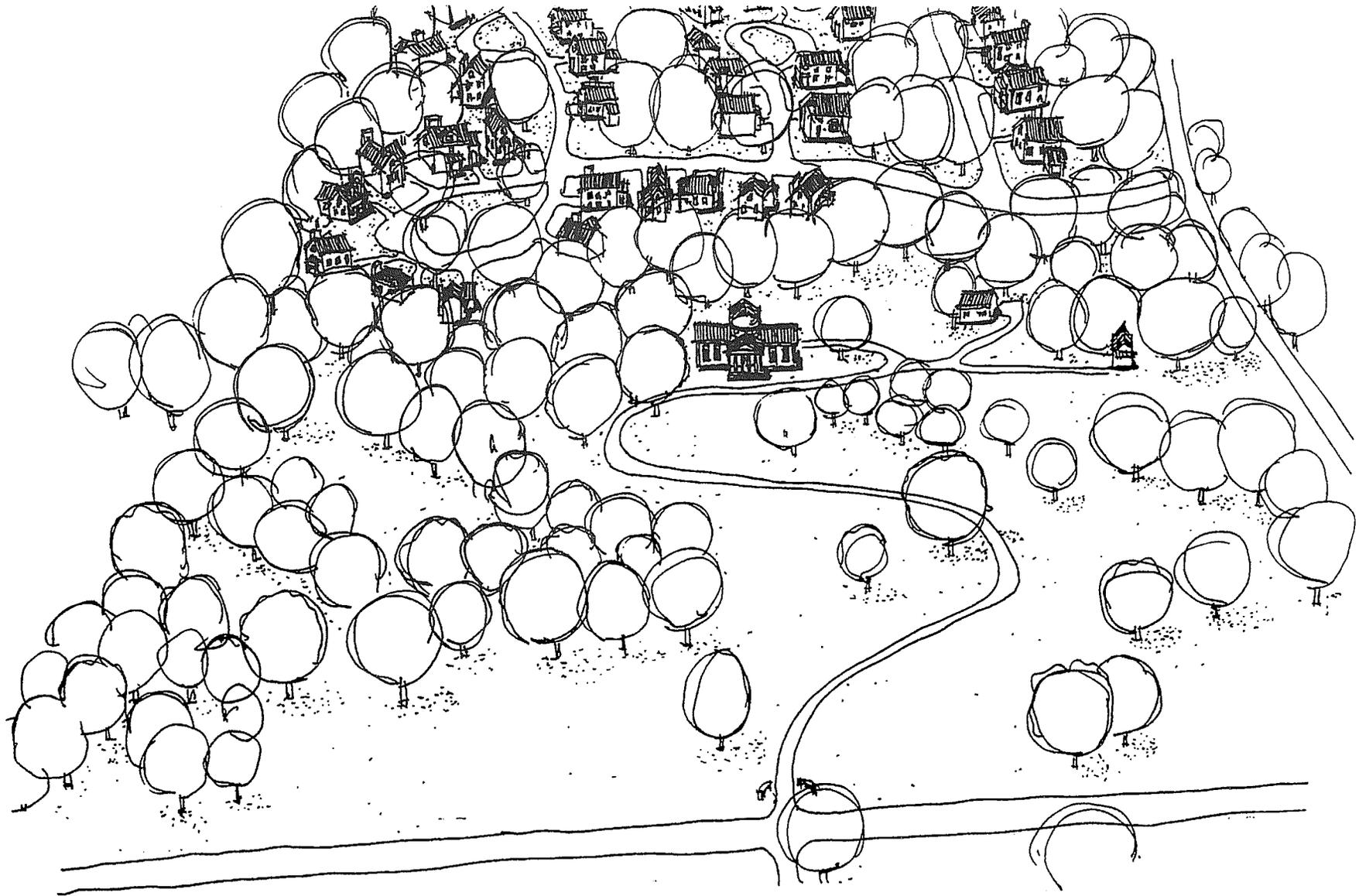
Centennial Hall's hill top site is prominent from both the air and the ground. The site is bound by Highway 96 West on the south, and Carlisle Lane on the east. The City of Franklin begins on the east side of Carlisle Lane.

## Scenario A: Based on Current Regulations



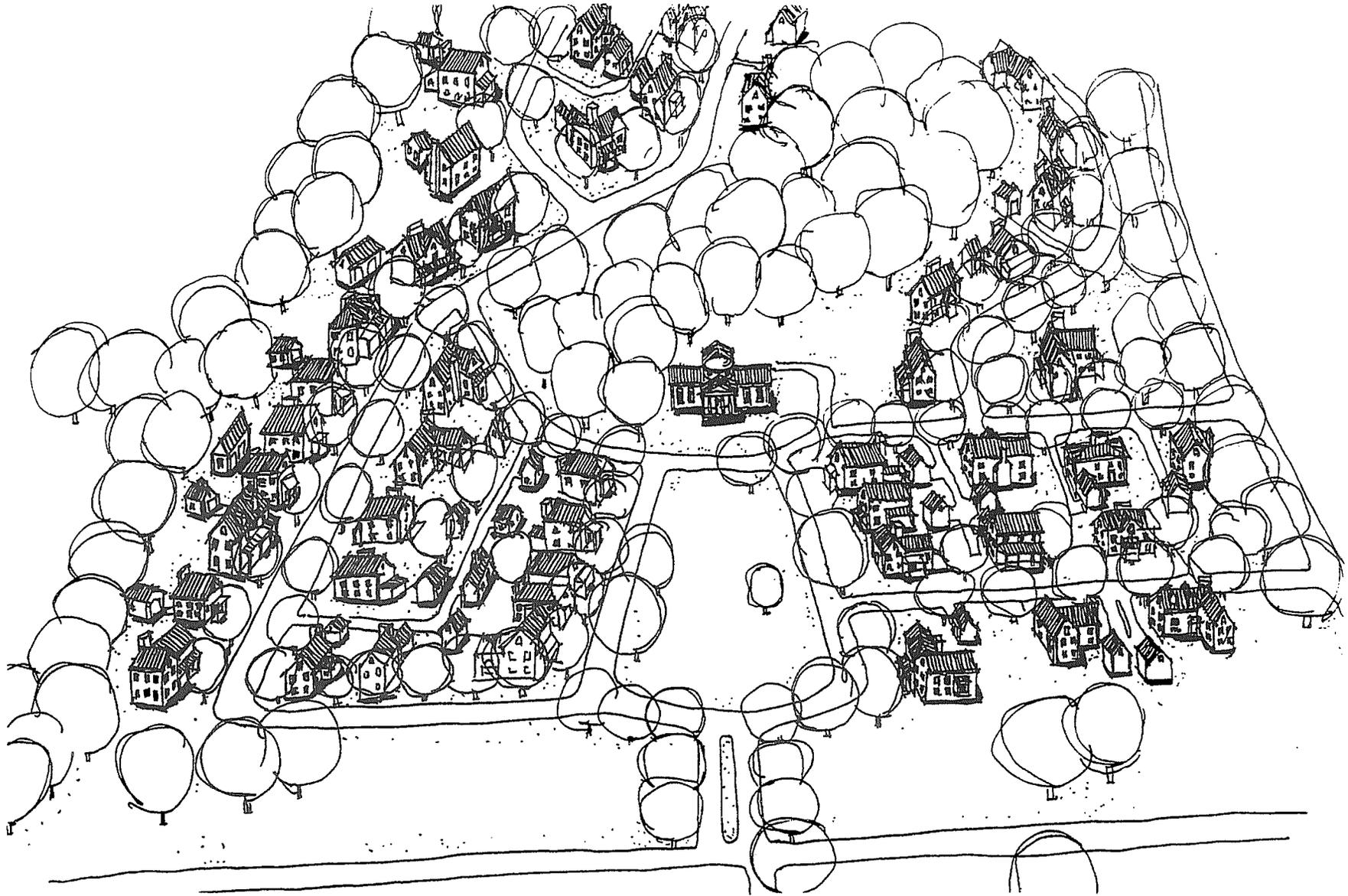
Hypothetical development of Centennial Hall's property based upon the City of Franklin's current development regulations. Although the site is presently in the county, it would most likely be annexed by the city if developed.

## Scenario B: Buffering Alternative



The buffering alternative, as shown in this alternative, retains open space around Centennial Hall by concentrating new development in the rear of the site.

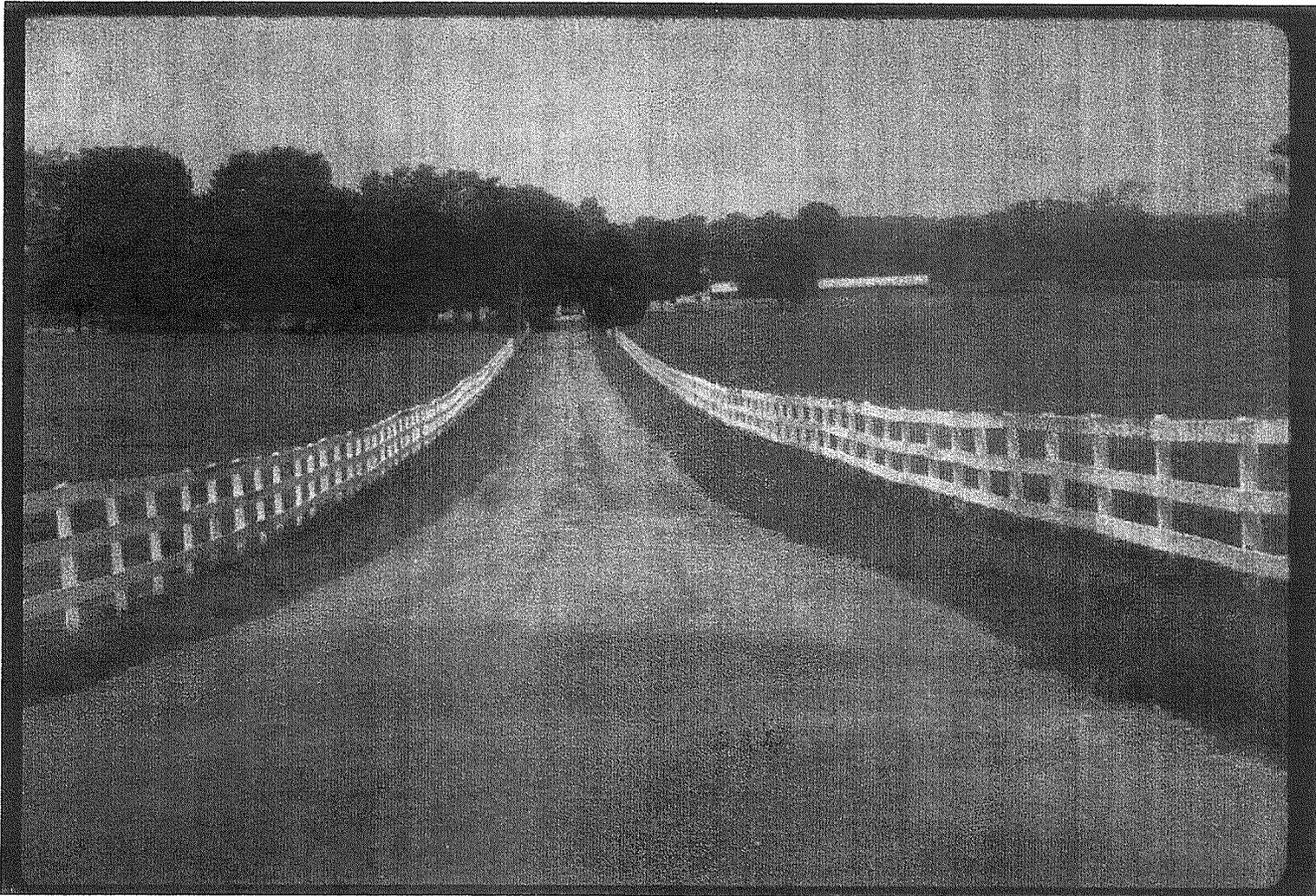
## Scenario C: Integrating Alternative



This alternative uses the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) approach, based upon pre-WWII planning principles, to sensitively integrate Centennial Hall in a manner that allows it to serve as a focal point and amenity for the development.

# The Future?

*The future holds many alternative paths for Franklin and Williamson County to follow. The integrity of historic rural buildings will not be preserved without proactive measures, including the formal adoption of design standards.*



# Common questions relating to this issue

**1) Why is it important to preserve the integrity of historic rural buildings in Franklin and Williamson County?**

The preservation of historic buildings is important for several reasons. One of the most tangible reasons is economic development via heritage tourism. Heritage tourism is a major industry which results in an injection of external dollars into the local economy. Money spent by tourists at local retail and service businesses also generates tax dollars, yet those same tourists do not cause a significant strain on the fiscal health of local governments since they are not service-demanding residents (e.g., no school children to educate, etc.). Without the preservation of historic rural buildings settings, the character and identity of Franklin and Williamson County would be severely compromised, lessening the visitor experience and causing a decrease in heritage tourism activity. Similarly, that same community character that attracts tourists also attracts permanent residents and businesses to the area. Only through managing development properly can we prevent growth from “killing the goose that laid the golden egg.” And finally, preservation efforts are worthwhile for the very act of preserving our heritage and instilling a sense of civic pride in the residents of Franklin and Williamson County.

**2) Won't land owners and developers lose financial value when required to leave an undeveloped buffer zone around historic buildings?**

Not necessarily. In many cases, when a developer commits to leaving one area undeveloped for open space, local governments allow increased density in other portions of the same development. Franklin and Williamson County both utilize forms of “transfer of development rights” (TDR) within their development codes. Consequently, there is often no net loss of lots. Furthermore, such open space and/or passive recreational space is often required anyway as part of development approval. In fact, many astute developers justify preservation efforts by recognizing the public relations and marketing value. A historic building and its preserved context can serve as a site amenity that gives the development its identity for marketing purposes. Lots located adjacently to any sort of maintained open space (neighborhood square, golf course, greenway, etc.) invariably sell for a premium.

**3) Is there really a residential market for “clustered development” and “traditional neighborhood developments” that utilize historic town planning principles?**

Consumer preference research has only recently begun to be used more by the development industry, but studies show that sales do not necessarily reflect consumer preferences. In fact, by engaging in “rearview mirror planning” by simply building today what sold yesterday, it appears that several market segments are being overlooked. Many of today's conventional suburban developments fail to recognize that changing demographics over the past ten years

have resulted in the emergence of substantial sub-markets (e.g., singles, single parents, couples without children, empty-nesters, etc.) whose life style preferences are not being met by current housing product. Many of these sub-markets prefer low-maintenance qualities of the smaller lots often associated with clustered and traditional neighborhood development, as well as the stronger sense of community which they typically offer.

**4) Are concepts such as clustered development and high-density traditional neighborhood development feasible for areas lacking public sewer systems?**

Yes, there are various methods of dealing with sewage treatment. In the case of clustered development in which each house is adjacent to open space, individual septic tanks for each house can be located within the open space. Another option is community septic systems, in which several homes utilize a single expansive septic system. Another approach is spray irrigation, in which waste water is heavily aerated in deep lagoons where it receives a secondary level of treatment similar to that provided by conventional sewage plants. It is then applied to the open land surface at rates consistent with the soil's natural absorption capacity. This approach has long track record of success in twenty states, with the largest number of examples being in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Florida and Delaware. In the case of larger traditional neighborhood developments in which septic systems are not a viable alternative, small-scaled sewage treatment plants designed to service only the subject development are sometimes an option.

**5) Where have these alternative development principles been successfully used?**

There are two primary alternative development principles being advocated in this document — clustered development and traditional neighborhood development (TND). Cluster development, sometimes referred to as open space development, is a term which has been abused over the years by zoning ordinances which have allowed it as an option, but without standards that achieve the desired effect. In most cases, the amount of required open space is minimal (less than 50%), giving the resulting developments more of a sprawl appearance rather than preserving substantial open space. Therefore, discounting such lesser examples, successful examples have been implemented in: Sussex County, Delaware; Brookfield, Wisconsin; Bucks County, Pennsylvania; Bethel Township, Pennsylvania; Amherst, Massachusetts; Concord, Massachusetts; Pawling, New York; Howard County, Maryland; Spotsylvania County, Virginia; and Willistown Township, Pennsylvania. According to planning consultant Randall Arendt in his book *Designing Open Space Subdivisions*,

“Realen Homes...has been enjoying record sales based upon its open space layouts. In their ‘Fairview’ development, which is the fastest selling subdivision in its price range in the county, large homes are located on lots one-third to one-half the normal size. But because more than half the land has been preserved, most homes command long views over the protected fields, which have been donated to a local land trust.”

Like open space development, traditional neighborhood development has also experienced growing success since the first one, Seaside, was developed in Walton County, Florida. Among the dozens of other successful TNDs are: Kentlands in Gaithersburg, Maryland; Harbortown in Memphis, Tennessee; Laguna West outside of Sacramento, California; Windsor in Indian River County, Florida; and Cordova the Town outside of Memphis, Tennessee.

**6) How can these guidelines be adopted and implemented by local governments?**

There are three general components needed for the County and its municipalities to put these guidelines into action. First, historic buildings meeting the significant criteria described in these guidelines must be identified, and this can be readily accomplished through existing historic sites survey maps already maintained by the Heritage Foundation. The next step is to formally adopt the guidelines through an ordinance. The language of the ordinance can be relatively straightforward and brief, and simply reference the guidelines. There is no need to translate the guidelines into legal jargon, so long as a formal ordinance exists to give them legal validity. The final step is implementation, which can be achieved through a design review body. The City of Franklin already has a design review mechanism in place by virtue of their historic preservation zoning, and that existing responsibility would be merely expanded to include the review of activities relevant to these guidelines. For other local governments that do not already have design review in place, that responsibility could either be performed by a newly created design review body, or delegated to an existing related body, such as a planning commission.

**7) What are the legal implications of instituting such guidelines? Won't this be considered a "taking"?**

A "taking" is a legal term referring to governmental regulation that is so restrictive that the legal rights and financial value of a property are reduced to the extent that financial compensation by the government is warranted. Despite the frequency of reference to this principle, the burden of proof in takings cases is considerable. To withstand a "takings" attack, a regulation basically has to pass two tests. First, the regulation's intent must be to further the health, safety and welfare of the public. The fact that the subject regulation will serve such a public good is generally supported through a report, study or plan. That threshold is already satisfied by this very document. The other litmus test applied to takings is that the property owner must be left with a "reasonable" economic value for his/her property. Although "reasonable" is often the subject of much debate, some courts have viewed even the downzoning of high to moderate-density residential land to agricultural uses as still retaining a "reasonable" value. Because these guidelines offer various approaches to land planning and development with the loss of few if any lots, the odds are heavily stacked against a successful takings attack unless the guidelines are excessively abused.