

Wheat and Tares
 REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN
 Center St. at Fairview Ave. (Davis Ford Rd.)

IS CHURCH OF BRETHREN
 SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7
 le Rd. on Rt. 28 near IBM

METHODIST CHURCH GAINESVILLE
 Welcoming All Visitors
 Church 754-4378
 Parsonage 754-4511
 Rev. G. Wayne Parsley
 Church School 9:45 a.m.
 Worship 11:00 a.m.
 A SMALL FRIENDLY CHURCH

BAPTIST CHURCH
 WEN, PASTOR
 Gospel Still Goes Forth
 10:00 a.m.
 11:00 a.m.
 7:00 p.m.
 7:30 p.m.
 Drive, Manassas
 st of Irongate)
 -8610

WILLIAM COUNTY

FILES

REFERENCE

VIRGINIANA FILE
 Prince William Public Library
 Manassas, Va.

HISTORIC SITE FILE **BUCKLAND**
 PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
 RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib Manassas, VA

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Manassas National Battlefield Park, target of many a controversy, would benefit from historic district zoning proposals supported by the county Historical Commission.



By Steve Mawyer—Potomac News

David Dietrich, president of the county Cultural Arts Federation, poses in front of the group's headquarters at Ben Lomond Manor. The federation is restoring the house.

Residents ready to guard past

Buckland first in line for protective zoning

By CLINT SCHEMMER
of the Potomac News

In Buckland, a tiny village on the west bank of Broad Run, Jim and Molly Toth are asking one government board to let another dictate, among other things, what color they may paint their house.

It would seem an unlikely wish, but the Toths aren't alone in their quest. For the community's greater good, they and nearly all of Buckland's two dozen residents are volunteering to surrender their rights as landowners to do as they wish with their private property.

Tonight, they take that offer to the Prince William County Planning Commission, which will consider whether to zone Buckland so that its historic character is preserved.

The commission's recommendation will set the stage for the Board of County Supervisors to act on the proposal, which has been gathering steam since 1982. With the villagers staunchly behind the measure, veteran political observers are betting the supervisors will swath Buckland in a layer of protective zoning.

If the supervisors do, it will be a first. While Prince William has had such zoning on the books for years, Buckland would be the first place to take advantage of the measures.

The reason is plain: the historic district zoning overlay, as it's officially known, exacts a price. To guard historic sites against threats from uncaring landowners and encroaching development, it imposes restrictions on the people who own the affected properties.

"It's a process of interference that no one really wants," Jim Toth acknowledged. "But given the alternative, in which anyone with a lot of money can come in and change things as they wish, we're willing to submit to zoning."

"My concern is trying to preserve this little time capsule. When you walk up the lane here, you're in a federal village. It's like looking through a time warp out to

Overlay Candidates

- Buckland — Prince William's first inland town, founded by miller John Love in 1798.
- Ben Lomond — plantation manor house built by Benjamin Tasker Chinn in 1837.
- Manassas National Battlefield Park — site of two Confederate victories in Civil War.

that 20th-century highway. It's different, it's neat and it's worth saving.

"If Buckland, an appealing village, is to stay that way, it seems like historic zoning is a good idea."

Buckland is a test case. What happens there, according to members of the county Historical Commission, will help determine where, how and if the county again uses the overlay zone — its most powerful tool for preserving historic sites.

"We think that once Buckland's done, others will follow," Commission Chairman Jane McDonald said. But Mrs. McDonald declined to say where she thinks historic zoning may next be proposed.

Others, more willing to hazard a prediction, suggest Ben Lomond Manor and Manassas National Battlefield Park are likely candidates.

But first, Buckland.

The tiny hamlet, a stone's throw from Fauquier County on U.S. 29, is already a historic district. The Virginia Historic Landmarks Board declared it a historic district on Dec. 8, granting official recognition to the heritage of Prince William's first inland town.

Established in 1798 along the south fork of Broad Run, Buckland was planted on land around John Love's dam and flour mill. A favorite wagon stop be-

tween Alexandria and Warrenton, it later gained notoriety during the Civil War for its role in an 1863 cavalry battle some call the "Buckland Races," said village historian Martha Leitch.

Two years earlier, as Union troops advanced into Fairfax County, Circuit Court Clerk Alfred Moss, a Buckland resident, grew concerned about the safety of George Washington's will in the courthouse there. His wife, hiding the document in her stockings, took it to their home until it could safely be sent to Richmond for the war's duration.

Today, Alfred Moss' two-story, tin-roofed home is one of 13 historic structures included in Buckland's 19.6-acre historic district.

An 1899 grist mill anchors the district's northern end. In its middle, Buckland Tavern and the Toths' frame house flank the village's center lane. The three-story tavern, carefully restored by retired builder Thomas Ash, entertained Lafayette in 1825 and Gen. George Armstrong Custer four decades later.

The 13 buildings, placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register in December, have been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. But alone, those honors do little to protect the village.

That's where zoning comes in.

Once their property is included in a historic overlay district, Buckland landowners will have to get permission from the county Architectural Review Board to build, demolish or alter structures within that zone. To appeal the review board, landowners petition the Board of County Supervisors, and if that fails, the Prince William Circuit Court.

To ease residents' concerns about those rules, the architectural board suggested minor alterations should be exempt from its review.

If adopted, the board's amendment

— See OVERLAY, Page E7



By Steve Mawyer—Potomac News

Long-time Buckland historian Martha Leitch joins Dr. Molly Toth and Col. James Toth as they stand beside Broad Run — at the edge of the town's historic district — with their grandchildren, Raubi and Mollie Dillhoff.

OVERLAY / From E1

would let homeowners install storm windows, gutters, window boxes and portable air conditioners that don't significantly change a building's appearance. It would also allow, without a permit, some landscaping and fences as well as antennas, skylights, solar collectors and small additions that can't be seen from a public street.

Mrs. McDonald, leary of predicting what the newly seated Board of County Supervisors will do, nonetheless said she believes the Buckland zoning proposal is "nearing the finish" of its long odyssey.

"I can't see but the county should be proud of something like this, proud to have a historic district like Buckland," she said.

Nokesville resident James Cooke, another member of the Historical Commission, saw it this way: "Chances look pretty good that Buckland will become our first historic district. I would think Ben Lomond's next in line."

Cook was speaking of Ben Lomond Manor, a two-story stone house that's long been a Sudley Road landmark. Benjamin Tasker Chinn built the home, which now stands a short distance from Va. 234, in 1837 as part of his 1,642-acre estate.

During both Civil War battles along Bull Run, the house served as a field hospital. Graffiti left by Union soldiers may still be seen on its interior walls.

Ben Lomond, which spent the early part of this century at several wealthy men's country estate, was sold in 1966 to Weaver Broth-

ers Corp. The development firm, which carved a huge subdivision from the former plantation, gave the manor house and six acres to Prince William County in 1981.

The late Anne Flory, then the Historical Commission's chairman, pushed hard to have Ben Lomond and its immediate surroundings protected as the county's first historic district.

Her effort, stalled by adjacent landowners' objections, failed for lack of support by the county supervisors.

"There were a lot of problems hanging fire on that one, so it died on the vine," commission member Donald Curtis recalled. "A whole series of things didn't fall into place."

But tonight, at former supervisor Tony Guiffre's request, a version of Mrs. Flory's proposal is back on the agenda.

Guiffre, who last year formed a committee to raise money for Ben Lomond's restoration, told the Planning Commission last month that special zoning could help preserve the site.

Curtis, asked his opinion of Guiffre's proposal, said, "What more good would it do?"

Gainesville Planning Commissioner Richard Hefter said he thinks the historic overlay district would make county officials more careful about reviewing projects on neighboring land.

But after reading a critical report by county planners, Hefter said he also has doubts about the measure.

"It looks kind of dicey with Ben

Lomond, whether it would add any protection since the county owns the property and it's listed on the National Register of Historic Places," he said.

Hefter was more upbeat about another mothballed candidate for a historic overlay district: Manassas National Battlefield Park.

Park Superintendent Rolland Swain has sought historic zoning for the battlefield and its environs since 1982, when the county land-use plan first proposed such protection for Prince William's outstanding historical sites.

In doing so, Swain has been trying to follow up on good-will gestures made by county supervisors during their bruising fight against history buffs seeking to enlarge the park.

Congress approved the expansion, but left it to county zoning to protect the battlefield's fringe from inappropriate development.

At the time, Don White, board of supervisors vice chairman, promised Prince William would carefully manage development near the park so it wouldn't detract from the national historic site.

Testifying in 1980 to a Senate subcommittee, White said, "The county board of supervisors has absolutely no intent whatever of doing anything to violate the integrity of [the] park." Today, Swain and park supporters say Prince William hasn't kept its part of the bargain.

They point to 1986, when county supervisors unanimously approved plans for a 94-foot highrise at Interstate 66 and Va. 234, on land the National Park Service tried to include in the enlarged battlefield. Four months later, the supervisors backed construction of five 10-sto-

ry office buildings on the same site.

Seen from the battlefield, those buildings will spoil the vista for park visitors trying to recreate, in their mind's eye, the conflict waged there during the Civil War, Swain and others say.

To bar more highrises and dense development on the park's boundaries, Swain, Guiffre and citizens' groups have proposed several different measures, including a historic overlay district.

At their urging, the county Historical Commission in August 1986 and last March asked the Board of County Supervisors to approve one of two proposals. The board never publicly discussed either request.

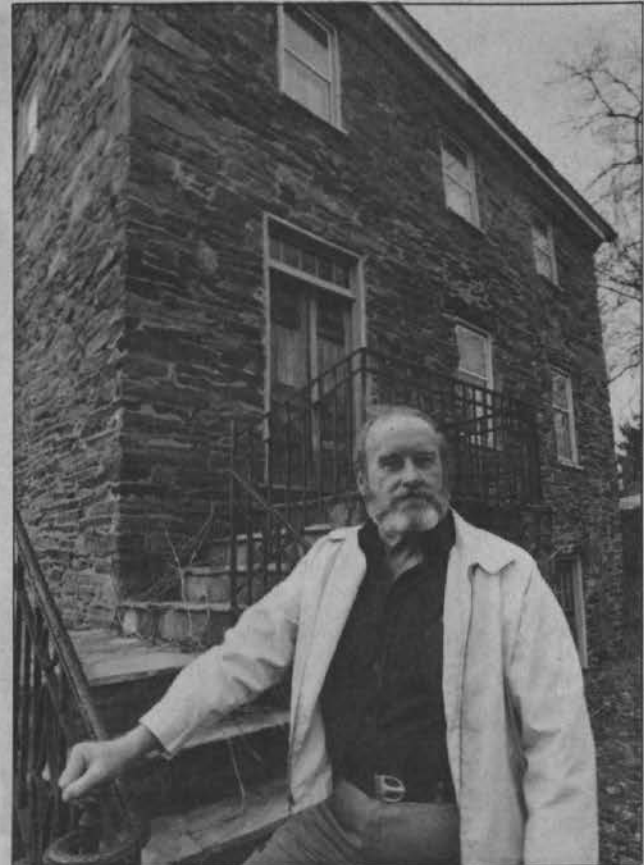
Mrs. McDonald, who last summer appointed a committee to review the issue, isn't pleased at the silence with which the panel's recommendations were greeted.

"The commission's written two letters to the supervisors; one should have sufficed," she said. "Now, with the new board, who knows?"

Swain agreed, saying, "If they're like the old board, there's probably not much hope. But if they're different, it might be worth raising the issue again. Right now, I think it's a little too early to tell."

Hefter, mulling the impasse, has a different idea. The Planning Commission, as it did with Buckland, could initiate historic rezoning for the battlefield and buffer lands, he said.

Hefter said he supports the idea. "If there's a logjam somewhere, I wouldn't have any problem with making a motion to recommend a historic district or park protection zone, to get the ball rolling," he said. "I think the Planning Commission can do that on its own."



By Steve Mawyer—Potomac News

Retired builder Thomas Ash restored Buckland Tavern, the town landmark most familiar to passersby on U.S. 29-211.