

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: AN EVALUATION OF THE PRESERVATION
OF WORLD WAR I-ERA PLANNED
COMMUNITIES

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Since its beginning during the 1930s in the United States, historic preservation has grown from grassroots organizations working to save local landmarks to the creation of Federal legislation, academic programs, as well as the preservation of buildings, landscapes, archaeological sites, and historic districts. In fact, the use of historic district designation as a preservation tool often leads to great successes. Benefits within a historic district range from traditional preservation goals of preserving architecture and landscape, to tax incentives for rehabilitation. Outside of the historic district, the surrounding community is often inspired to formulate and pursue revitalization and rehabilitation efforts of its own. The common goal of protecting and preserving the built environment also helps create a strong sense of

community within historic districts. The history of the community, a binding force for the community, is viewed as an asset and celebrated as such.

In response to housing needs for workers during World War I, the United States government designed and built communities for defense industries. These communities are important landmarks in the history of the built environment because they were the first community development projects lead by the federal government and because of the heavy influence of Garden City design principles, a movement that had already produced planned villages in England. In addition, they are case studies for understanding and measuring the tools and mechanisms of historic preservation planning in communities that were designed as a whole.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine three of these historic, planned communities located in the mid-Atlantic region of the East Coast: Yorkship Village in Camden, New Jersey; Hilton Village in Newport News, Virginia; and Dundalk Village in Baltimore, Maryland. This work demonstrates that successful preservation in these communities is based on the presence of three conditions:

- Measures and techniques available for the protection of the original village design and architecture;
- Mechanisms in place that allow for the adaptability of the historic fabric to contemporary needs; and
- Recognition by the community that its history is an asset.

Then, based on the evaluation of Hilton Village and Yorkship Village, a preservation plan is recommended for Dundalk Village. Areas for improvement and barriers in the case studies are also outlined. This thesis provides valuable insight into historic preservation in planned communities and how such efforts are crucial to the vitality and longevity of these historic places.