Individual Property/District
Maryland Historical Trust
Internal NR-Eligibility Review Form

Property/District Name: Suitland Corner

Survey Number: PG: 75A-34

Tax Parcel #: PG Book 4, Map 80, 0498

MapKey#:

Project: MD 458: MD 5 to MD 4 Roadway Improve

Agency: State Highway Administration (SHA)

Site visit by SHA Staff: Yes SHA Staff Name: Jill Dowling SHA Visit Date: 12/1/97

Eligibility Recommendation: Not Recommended

Criteria: Consideration:

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

Suitland Corner is an early commercial strip mall located at the corner of Silver Hill and Suitland Roads, across from the Suitland Federal Center. Eight storefronts of varying width constructed between 1938 and 1955 house a range of commercial enterprises including a Goodwill Store, a restaurant, and various specialty stores. Surrounding the structures, the entire parcel has been paved with concrete, forming a pull-in parking lot.

Although this strip mall relates to trends of suburban development influenced by Suitland Federal Center and federal decentralization, research has not revealed any direct association between this complex and events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A) or the lives of persons significant in the past (Criterion B). The structures are fair examples of the evolving commercial style of the mid-twentieth century, but none are distinguished; they do not represent the work of a master or display high artistic merit (Criterion C). Further, the complex suffers from serious deterioration, and both its condition in general and the local setting compromise the historic integrity of the resource. Although archeology was not addressed in this study, there is no indication that the property is likely to yield information important in history or pre-history. (Criterion D). Therefore, this property is not National Register-eligible.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in:

MD 458: MD 5 to MD 4

Documentation Prepared by: Jill Dowling

Preservation Services Reviewer: 5/5/98 Date

NR program concurrence:

Reviewer, NR Program 5/5/9 Date

Capsule Summary

Suitland Corner
Prince George's County, MD
PG 75A-34

Description:

Suitland Corner is an early commercial strip mall located at the corner of Silver Hill and Suitland Roads, across from the Suitland Federal Center. Eight storefronts of varying width constructed between 1938 and 1955 house a range of commercial enterprises including a Goodwill Store, a restaurant, and various specialty stores. Surrounding the structures, the entire parcel has been paved with concrete, forming a pull-in parking lot.

Significance:

Suitland Corner is significant as an early commercial strip mall, developed to accommodate the influx of workers and inhabitants associated with the establishment of the Suitland Federal Center circa 1940. The earliest of the buildings, the Goodwill Store, exhibits the architectural detail typical of earlier twentieth century commercial construction. Other storefronts witness the sacrifice of design and aesthetics to rapid suburban development typical later in the era of the automobile.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST Inventory No. PG 75A-34
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

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1. Name of Property

==========

historic name Suitland Corner
common/other name _____

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2. Location

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street & number 4700 Block Suitland Road not for publication _____
city or town Suitland vicinity __ state MD code _____
county Prince George's code _____ zip code 20746

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A

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4. National Park Service Certification N/A

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check all that apply)

- x private
- ____ public-local
- ____ public-State
- ____ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ____ building(s)
- X district
- ____ site
- ____ structure
- ____ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
8	____	buildings
____	____	sites
____	____	structures
____	____	objects
8	____	Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?
Yes ____ Name of Listing _____
No X

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Commerce/Trade	Department Store
Commerce/Trade	Specialty Store
Commerce/Trade	Restaurant

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Commerce/Trade	Department Store
Commerce/Trade	Specialty Store
Commerce/Trade	Restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Modern: Moderne/Modern Classic

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
roof Synthetic Membrane
walls Brick
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 7-1

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8. Statement of Significance
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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

____ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

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

__X__ 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.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

__X__ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance 1938-1955

Significant Dates 1938,1942, 1948,1950, 1955

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-1

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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(Cite the books, articles, legal records, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property Less than one acre

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The district is bounded by Silver Hill Road, Suitland Road, Huron Avenue, and the alley behind the buildings and conforms to tax parcel 995 #s 1-8.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The roads isolate the commercial strip comprising the district.

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11. Form Prepared By
==========
name/title Jill Dowling
organization SHA date March 20, 1998
street & number 707 N. Calvert St. telephone 410-545-8559
city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21202
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12. Property Owner
==========
name Various
street & number 4700 Block Suitland Rd. telephone
city or town Suitland state MD zip code 20746
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Suitland Corner is an early commercial strip mall located at the corner of Silver Hill and Suitland Roads, across from the Suitland Federal Center. Eight storefronts of varying width constructed between 1938 and 1955 house a range of commercial enterprises including a Goodwill Store, a restaurant, and various specialty stores. Surrounding the structures, the entire parcel has been paved with concrete, forming a pull-in parking lot.

Building #1, the Goodwill Store, is the widest of the storefronts and occupies the largest lot on the corner of Suitland and Silver Hill, with a total of 17,743 square feet. Built in 1938, this store is also the most ornamented and the only to clearly express an individualized architectural style. Constructed of brick laid up in American 6 course bond, square pilasters in relief indicate supporting members on the southeast elevation. Single pane display windows above a red ceramic tiled base panel and a new awning characterize the facade. Above the awning, a concrete cornice embellished with incised art deco or stripped classic detail crowns the front elevation. The store is one large unpartitioned showroom with storage in the rear.

Buildings #2 and #3 consist of two narrow brick storefronts. Constructed in 1955, the narrow structure contiguous to the Goodwill Store houses a beauty supply shop. Building #3, constructed in 1950, houses JC Fashions. Large plate glass display windows dominate the street facade, and a short, unembellished parapet spans from the Goodwill Store west to the two story Building #4. The parapet of the JC Fashions store is slightly recessed from that of the beauty supply store, which is also distinctively parged. Both structures have flat roofed shelters over the storefront.

Building #4 is two stories high and six bays wide, and was constructed in 1942. The brick structure features plate glass windows and concrete base panels housing two separate stores; Executive TV and Video and a hardware store. The symmetrical facade distinguishes the two stores through the design of the parapet, by the second story double-single-double fenestration pattern, and by separate entrances centered beneath the raised parapet sections on the ground floor.

Buildings #5,6,7,and 8 are of similar design, all single story bays featuring a plain brick parapet, and distinguished by concrete capped brick pilasters. All were constructed in 1948. All structures appeared to have originally had a glass block transom beneath a soldier course interrupting the typical six course American bond, although this has been obscured by a shingled awning on Building #5,

and bricked in on Building #8. The Suitland Restaurant (Building #7) maintains original neon signage and features a historic metal awning.

Of all the structures, the Goodwill Store is in the best condition, exhibiting only mild deterioration with some pointing and caulking necessary. The other storefronts suffer from more serious deterioration, and several have been abandoned. Rusted metal, vandalism such as broken windows, and insensitively affixed signage constitute the most serious threats to the complex.

The setting of the complex has evolved to reflect increased local traffic and crime. To accommodate parking, the entire block has been paved into a parking lot, and any traces of landscaping generally associated with older commercial areas removed. Bars and metal screens are installed on the buildings to prevent theft and vandalism; across the street, a metal fence keeps trespassers from accessing Suitland Federal Center.

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Historians have noted the radical change that took place in American architecture between 1915 and 1940. At the beginning of this period, good planning, sound construction, variety, and aesthetic sensitivity weighed equally in architectural consideration. By the end of the period, superfluities were stripped in favor of pragmatism and frugality, and urban planning was foregone for rapid war-era expansion and development. With the widening availability of automobiles, people abandoned the cities. Suburban culture catered to a mobile society. The federal government began an expansion out of Washington DC and into outlying counties, and sought to create a ``federal city'' comprised both of offices and worker housing centered on the developing complex at Suitland. While this was never fully realized, stores, restaurants, schools, and housing developments replaced historic farms throughout Prince George's County. The unchecked sprawl continued through modern times, rendering the local setting an amalgam of retrofitted early commercial buildings, government offices, franchise operations, and modern strip malls.

As a complex, Suitland Corner maintains the features typical of historic storefronts. Constructed primarily of brick, large plate glass windows allow merchants to display their wares. Embellished cornices and parapets crown the complex, distinguishing the stores through their variety, defying the contiguous arrangement of the structures. Base panels exhibit treatments ranging from the ornate red ceramic tile of the Goodwill Store to more typical parged smooth and textured surfaces. The ornamentation expressed in the Goodwill Store (1938) contrasts the simple composition of the older structures, illustrating the architectural progression described above.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. PG 75A-34

Suitland Corner
name of property
Prince George's Co, MD
county and state

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization:

Western Shore

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Modern Period

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Community Planning
Economic (Commercial and Industrial)

RESOURCE TYPE(S)

Category:

Building

Historic Environment:

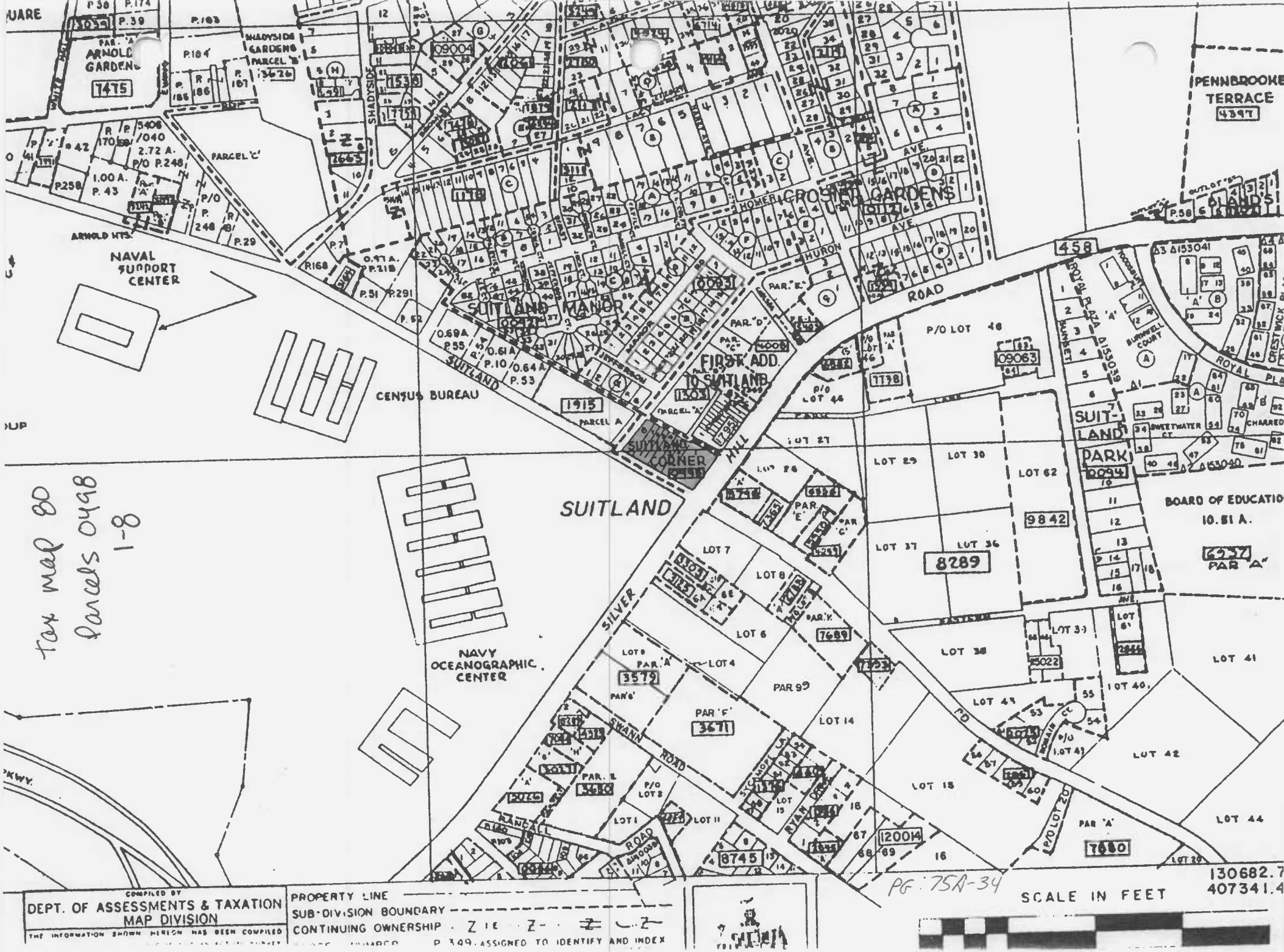
Suburban

Historic Function (s):

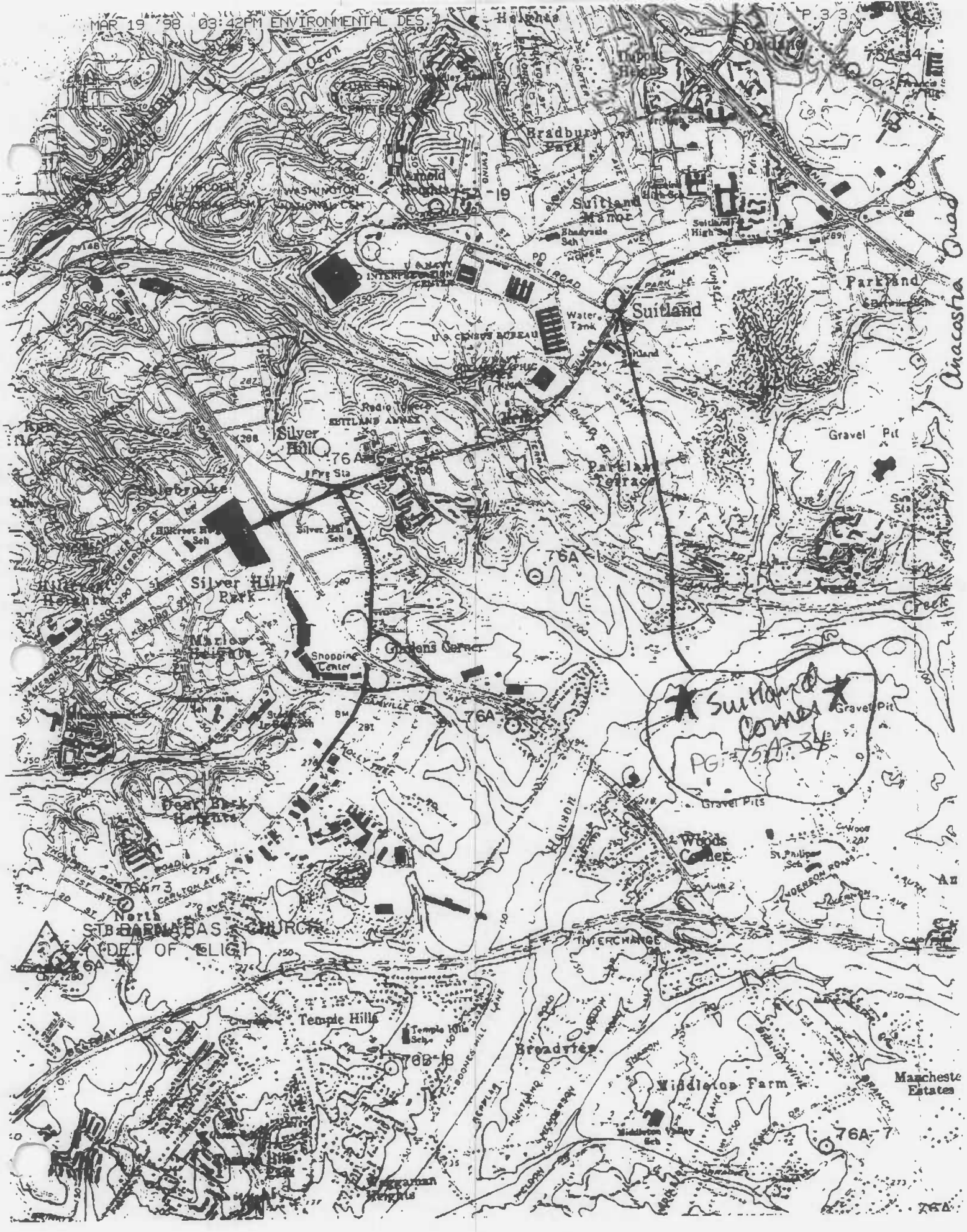
Commercial

Known Design Source:

Unknown



Tax map 80
Parcels 0498
1-8
ARNOLD GARDENS
7475
SHADYSIDE GARDENS PARCEL 'B'
3626
PARCEL 'C'
ARNOLD HTS.
NAVAL SUPPORT CENTER
CENSUS BUREAU
SUITLAND MANOR
FIRST ADD. TO SUITLAND
SUITLAND CORNER
0498
SUITLAND
NAVY OCEANOGRAPHIC CENTER
CROSFIELD GARDENS
HOMER AVE.
HURON AVE.
PENNBROOKE TERRACE
4397
ROYAL PLAZA
SUITLAND PARK
0094
BOARD OF EDUCATION
10.51 A.
PAR 'A'
SILVER HILL ROAD
SWANN ROAD
RYAN DRIVE
LOT 7
LOT 8
LOT 6
LOT 4
LOT 14
LOT 15
LOT 16
LOT 27
LOT 29
LOT 30
LOT 62
LOT 37
LOT 36
LOT 38
LOT 40
LOT 41
LOT 42
LOT 44
LOT 43
P/O LOT 46
8289
9842
3579
3671
7689
8745
120014
7680
PG. 75A-34
SCALE IN FEET
130682.7
407341.4
COMPILED BY
DEPT. OF ASSESSMENTS & TAXATION
MAP DIVISION
THE INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON HAS BEEN COMPILED
PROPERTY LINE
SUB-DIVISION BOUNDARY
CONTINUING OWNERSHIP
P 349 ASSIGNED TO IDENTIFY AND INDEX


Suitland Corner
PG 75A-34
Suitland
Suitland Manor
Bradbury Park
Parkland
Parkland Terrace
Silver Hill
Silver Hill Park
Marlow Heights
Shopping Center
Gardens Corner
Gravel Pit
Gravel Pits
Woods Corner
Deer Park Heights
North
STB BARNABAS CHURCH
(DET OF ELIG)
Temple Hills
Broadview
Middleton Farm
Manchester Estates
Anacostia Quad
Water Tank
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
Radio Tower
SUITLAND ANNEX
Fire Sta
Silver Hill Sch
Hillcrest Heights Sch
Temple Hills Sch
Middleton Valley Sch
Waggaman Heights
INTERCHANGE
76A-1
76A-3
76A-4
76A-5
76A-7
76B-18
75A-19
75A-34

ONLY
NO DUMPING

PG 75A34
Suitland Corner
Prince Georges Co MD
Jill Dowling
3198
MDSH PO
SUITLAND CORNER
BLDGS 1-8
1 OF 8

NO
DUMPING
VIOLATORS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED
NO TRESPASSING
INCLUDING
SLEEPING
VENDORS OR
LOITERING.
THE
SALVATION
ARMY
BEDDIN
CLOTHIN

PG 75A34
SUITLAND CORNER
PRINCE GEORGES CO MD
JILL DOWLING
3/98
MDSHPO
GOODWILL STORE - BLDG #1
2 OF 8

BEAUTY
CLEANING
EXPERT
ALTERATIONS
FURNITURE
BEDDING
AMOCO
HION SUITS • JEWELRY
ES • TOYS • WATCHS • BAGS
RODUCTS • HUMAN-HAIRS

PG 75 A 34
SUITLAND CORNER
PRINCE GEORGES CO MD
JILL DOWLING
3/98
MDSHPO
GOODWILL STORE - VIEW SOUTH
3 OF 8

PG 75A34
SUITLAND CORNER
PRINCE GEORGES CO MD
JILL DOWLING
3/98
MDSHPO
GOODWILL SO ELEVATION
4 OF 8

BEAUTY
SUPPLY
THRIFT STORE
BEDDING
FURNITURE

PG 75 A 34
SUITLAND CORNER
PRINCE GEORGES CO MD
JILL DOWLING
3198
MDSHPO
BLDGS 1 + 2
5 OF 8

JC FASHIONS
BEAUTY
SUPPLY
BEDDING
FURNITURE
CLOTHING

PG 75 A 34
SUITLAND CORNER
PRINCE GEORGES CO MD
JILL DOWLING
3/98
MDSHPO
BLDGS 1-5
6 OF 8

CLEAN CLEANERS
FASHIONS

PG 75 A 34
SUITLAND CORNER
PRINCE GEORGES CO MD
JILL DOWLING
3/98
MDSHPO
BLDGS 3-8
7 OF 8

SUITLAND
Restaurant
FOR RENT

PG 75 A 34
SUITLAND CORNER
PRINCE GEORGES CO MD

JILL DOWLING

3/98

MDSHPO

DETAIL - BLDG 7

8 OF 8