



TOWSON ESTATES

ESTABLISHED 1929

Design Review Guidelines

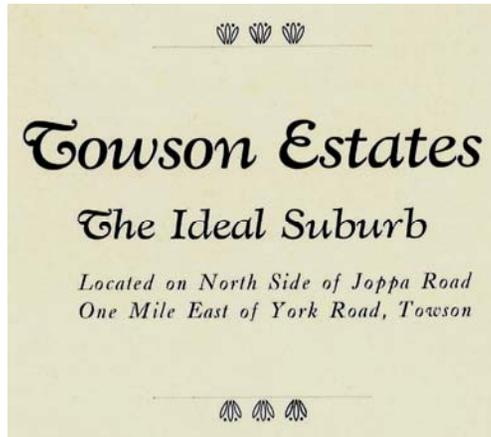
Adopted by the Towson Estates Association, November, 2016

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INTRODUCTION

The neighborhood of Towson Estates is located in Towson, Maryland, 21286. The development's 64 single family and duplex homes have an Old-World charm and are surrounded by fountains, stone walls, mature trees, and gardens. Although in close proximity to the Baltimore Beltway, numerous shopping centers, and bustling downtown Towson, Towson Estates is tucked away and enjoys a secluded atmosphere.



Title page, "Towson Estates: The Ideal Suburb", c. 1930

Towson Estates was constructed in the late 1920's through early 1940's as an upscale rental community. Encompassing 107 acres of land, Towson Estates is bordered by E. Joppa Rd. to the south, Edgewood Rd. to the west and north, and Edgeclift Rd. to the east, and has no through streets. At the time it was built, Towson Estates was adjacent to the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad line and had its own train stop. The neighborhood boasted gas and electricity in every home and was supplied water by artesian wells. The years have seen the removal of the railroad tracks and the addition of Goucher Blvd. and city water supply.

Developer Walter C. Mylander envisioned the neighborhood of Towson Estates as "the most unique as well as ideal in the vicinity of Baltimore City." Beginning in the late 1950's, the homes became available for sale for the first time. Several of the first homeowners still reside in the neighborhood. Although some in-fill development has occurred over the years, much of Towson Estates remains unchanged. These fine stone houses reflect the craftsmanship and pride that Mylander invested in his "ideal homes ideally located."

Towson Estates is attractive to homeowners because it was so carefully built and has been so lovingly preserved. For nearly ninety years, homeowners have maintained the neighborhood's overall visual integrity and cohesiveness. The Design Guidelines in this document seek to preserve the charm and historic importance of Towson Estates.



View of Towson Estates and the Ma & Pa Railroad bridge from Joppa Rd.
Undated: Courtesy of BACO Library

DESIGN REVIEW

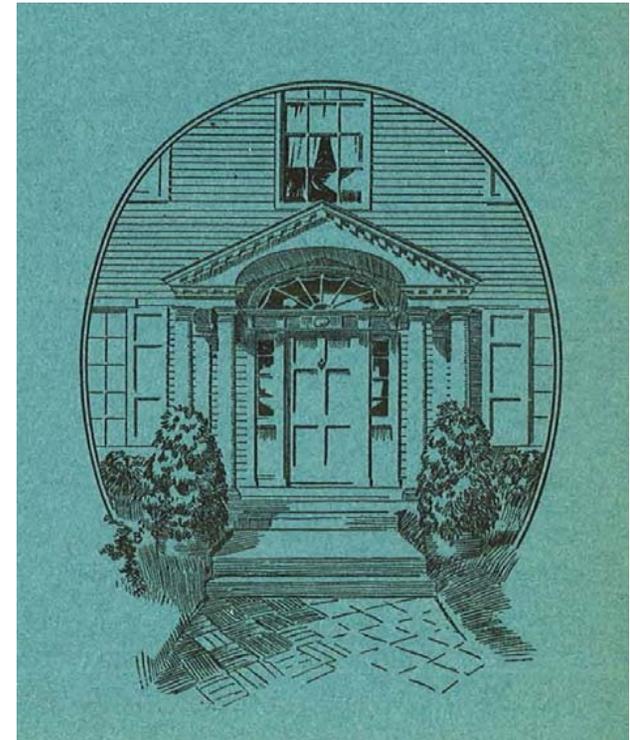
New construction in Towson Estates is encouraged if the proposed design and siting are compatible with the neighborhood's character. These Guidelines are not created to prevent newly constructed homes or additions from being built but, rather, to ensure that they do not compromise or destroy the special historic and architectural character of the neighborhood. New construction should ensure that Towson Estate's architectural and material vocabulary is respected. The height, the proportion, the roof shape, the materials, the texture, the scale, the details, and the color of the proposed building should be compatible with existing historic buildings. However, compatible contemporary designs rather than historic duplications are encouraged.

Design review based on these guidelines is limited to the construction of new dwellings on vacant lots or substantial additions to the dwellings constructed by the original builder of the Towson Estates development, and any included accessory structures, patios, fences and walls. Substantial additions to existing dwellings that were not part of the original development should match or be compatible with the dwelling's architectural style and materials, and will be reviewed administratively by the chair of the Design Review Panel and Department of Planning staff. "Substantial additions" are defined as those greater than 50% of the gross square footage of the existing dwelling.

Design Review and approval is required before construction may commence. The Guidelines on following pages provide guidance to both the DRP members and to builders. These Guidelines present a commonsense approach to determining the appropriateness of newly constructed homes and substantial additions.

For a complete description of the DRP and its processes, please consult the "Baltimore County Design Review Panel Residential Review Packet" available at:

<http://resources.baltimorecountymd.gov/>.



TOWSON ESTATES

SCALE AND ORIENTATION

Newly constructed homes in Towson Estates should fit seamlessly into their surroundings. Therefore, construction should follow the original concept achieved in Towson Estates. The neighborhood consists of homes, which, while not identical, have a look that is in harmony with one another. In order to preserve the historic integrity of the neighborhood, new structures should reflect the construction of existing homes, namely:

- ◆ Single-family
- ◆ Detached
- ◆ Two stories or fewer
- ◆ Oriented toward the street
- ◆ Front and back yards
- ◆ “Classical Revival” style including Tudor, Dutch Colonial, Cape Cod, French Country, and Colonial.

New construction in Towson Estates is subject to DRP review as well as all zoning regulations which govern the permissible type of dwelling unit, height, minimum setback, etc.



All photos from the original rental booklet “Towson Estates: The Ideal Suburb”, c. 1930

TOWSON ESTATES

EXTERIOR WALLS AND TRIM

Towson Estates homes, as originally designed and constructed, were built to provide the best basic scheme of period-appropriate development and an air of beauty and substantiality. Original documents from the neighborhood's developers bemoan the influx of "cheap monstrosities" in the area and thus only the best construction materials were selected for Towson Estates, and the neighborhood continues to be known for its distinct stone homes. To preserve the integrity of the neighborhood, new construction should reflect the exterior walls and trim of existing homes:

Preferred materials and style:

- ◆ Butler stone rubble, either rustic or white in color, on the lower floor or both floors
- ◆ Wood shingles, cedar shake, cementitious siding, slate shingles, stucco, or equivalents, on the upper floor (if both floors are not stone) and/or dormers of new dwellings, or for additions and accessory structures
- ◆ Simple wood or wood-look trim on windows, doors, and cornices

To be avoided:

- ◆ Vinyl siding
- ◆ Imitation stone façade (e.g. Formstone)
- ◆ Exterior insulation finish systems (EIFS)
- ◆ Ornate trim or "gingerbread"



Towson Estates homes are Butler stone, often with cedar shake, stucco, or slate shingles the upper level

TOWSON ESTATES

WINDOWS AND DOORS

Windows and doors by their proportion, shape, positioning, location, pattern, and size can contribute significantly to a building's historic character and are particularly indicative of stylistic periods. Towson Estates homes were constructed with Georgian windows; some houses also have shutters and/or garden windows. Doors are paneled wood, often with small windows. Some homes have arched doors and/or transom windows. Towson Estates homes typically feature a single front door and multiple symmetrical windows on all sides of the house. New construction should reflect the style of windows and doors in existing homes:

Preferred materials and style:

- ◆ Paneled wood doors, either arched or rectangular, with or without small windows
- ◆ Simple storm doors with as much glass/screen as possible
- ◆ Georgian windows, either wood or wood-look, with muntins
- ◆ Slatted or raised-panel shutters
- ◆ Transom windows
- ◆ Garden windows
- ◆ Casement windows in basements

To be avoided:

- ◆ Plate glass windows
- ◆ Glass block
- ◆ Bay or bow windows
- ◆ Flush or un-paneled doors



*Windows are Georgian style, with or without shutters.
Doors are curved or rectangular, with or without transom windows.*

TOWSON ESTATES

ENTRYWAYS, PORCHES, AND PATIOS

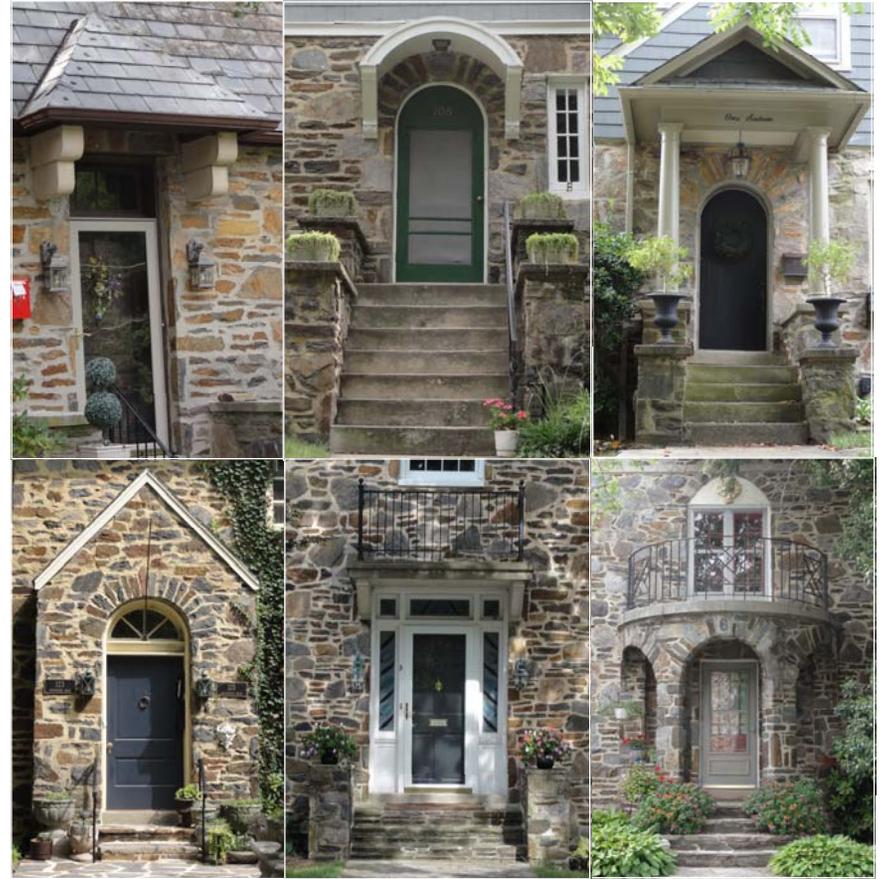
The various functional components of porches and entrances, including steps, balustrades, columns, pilasters, and entablatures, all add stylistic embellishment to historic buildings while providing scale and detail. Houses in Towson Estates typically have small porticos with peaked or rounded roofs supported by columns. Some have extended stone entryways or small balconies above the front door. Due to Towson Estate's hills, most houses have stone and concrete steps leading to the front door. Many houses also feature side porches and/or patios, often located over the garage. New construction should have porches, entryways, and patios which have similar features to existing structures:

Preferred materials and style:

- ◆ Front portico with a peaked or rounded roof
- ◆ Columns with simple, unadorned capitals
- ◆ Side porch, open or enclosed by windows or screens
- ◆ Stone entryway
- ◆ Patio or porch over the garage
- ◆ Stone and/or concrete front steps

To be avoided:

- ◆ Wrap-around porches
- ◆ Ornate column capitals (e.g. Corinthian style)



A variety of stone and columned entryways can be found throughout the neighborhood. Porches are often screened or glassed in, with the top of the garage forming a patio.

TOWSON ESTATES

ROOFS AND CHIMNEYS

The shape of a building's roof is one of its most important character-defining features. The form of the roof and its features are also key elements of the building's style. Some roofs are more visually prominent than others and the materials of the roof can also be a major character-defining element. The majority of the original homes in Towson Estates have gabled roofs and dormers. Dormers feature cedar shake, grey slate shingles, or stucco. Several homes have Dutch Colonial or flat roofs that are in keeping with the general style of the neighborhood. The original homes in Towson Estates have dark grey slate roofs and red brick and/or stone chimneys. New construction materials should approximate the visual characteristics of the historic roofing and chimneys to the greatest extent possible, including:

Preferred materials and style:

- ◆ Gabled, Dutch Colonial, or Hipped roof, with or without dormers
- ◆ Grey slate or slate-look shingles on roofs
- ◆ Wood shingles, cedar shake, grey slate or slate-look shingles, or stucco on dormers
- ◆ Red brick and/or stone chimney

To be avoided:

- ◆ Asphalt shingles
- ◆ Terra-cotta or Spanish-style roofs
- ◆ A-frame roof shape
- ◆ Roof colors other than grey
- ◆ Concrete chimneys



*Roofs are slate shingle.
Chimneys are red brick and/or stone.*

TOWSON ESTATES

FENCES AND WALLS

Fences and walls are important constructed features of the landscape that help define the context of the site for a building. The low Butler stone walls throughout Towson Estates are one of its most characteristic features. Some lots also have wooden privacy fences in back and/or side yards, or retaining walls constructed of Butler stone or railroad ties. Construction of new fences or walls in Towson Estates should consider the appropriateness of their design, location, height, materials, and details to the specific site as well as the neighborhood.

Preferred materials and style:

- ◆ Walls of rubble Butler stone, either rustic or white
- ◆ Retaining walls of Butler stone or railroad ties
- ◆ Rear and/or side fences of wood

To be avoided:

- ◆ Chain-link fences
- ◆ Vinyl panel fences



Rustic stone walls are a defining feature of Towson Estates.

TOWSON ESTATES

GARAGES AND DRIVEWAYS

The original garages and smaller outbuildings in Towson Estates echo the materials, details, and roof form of the main house on the site. Through their siting and relationship to the houses, the streets, and the alleys, the accessory buildings contribute to the historic character of the neighborhood as well. Garages in Towson Estates are one or two bays and are often attached to the house with the roof of the garage serving as a porch or patio. They are located to the side or behind the main house, with a one-lane driveway of asphalt or concrete leading to the street. Newly constructed garages and driveways should reflect the style of existing structures:

Preferred materials and style:

- ◆ One or two bay garage, attached or detached
- ◆ Garage roof serving as patio or porch, or roofed with grey slate or slate-look shingles
- ◆ Garage walls of Butler stone, wood shingles, cedar shake, or equivalent

To be avoided:

- ◆ Vinyl siding
- ◆ 3-or more bay garages
- ◆ Circular driveways
- ◆ Pre-fabricated garages and sheds
- ◆ Carports

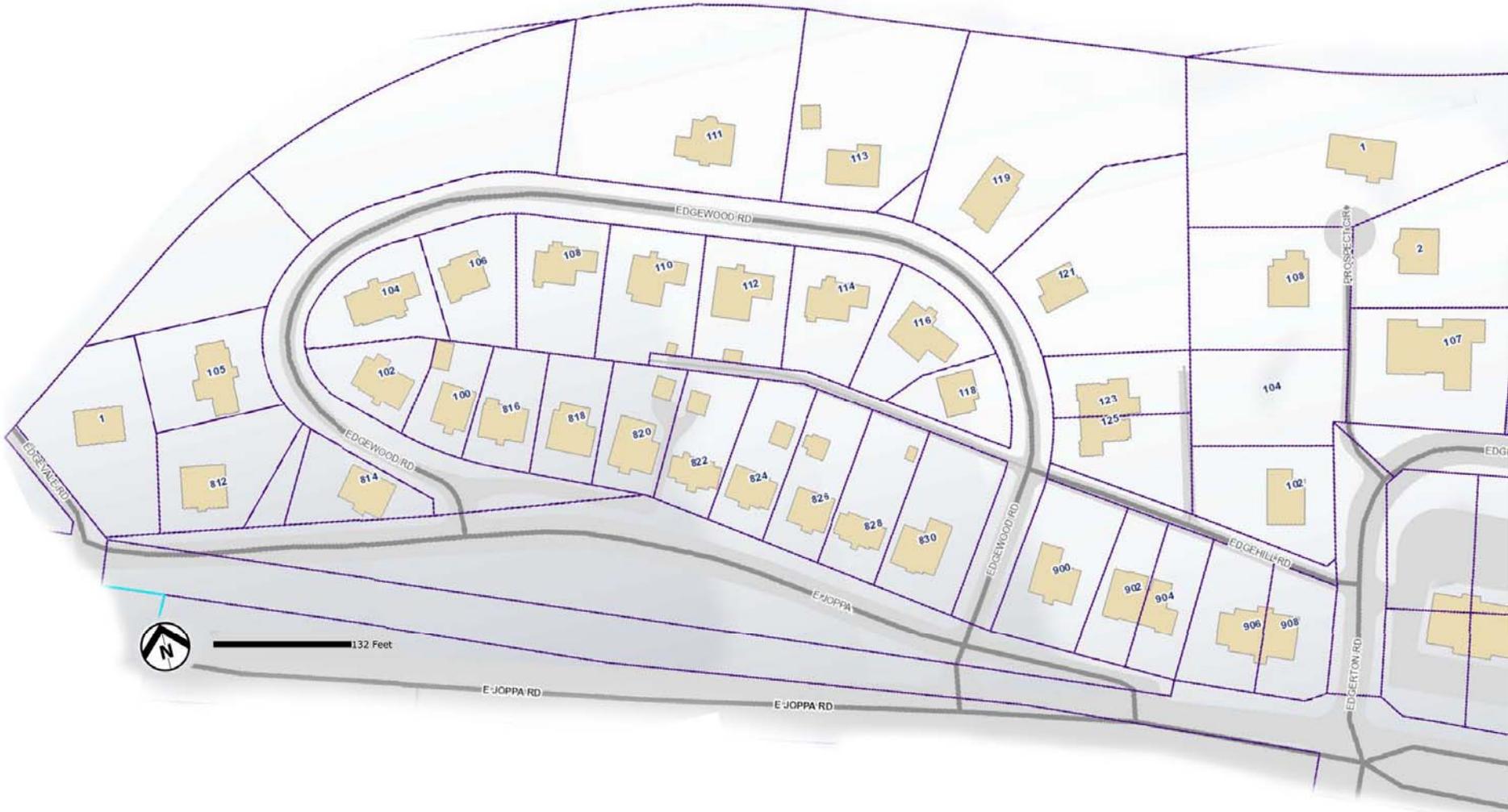


Garages are attached or detached and constructed of similar materials to the main house.



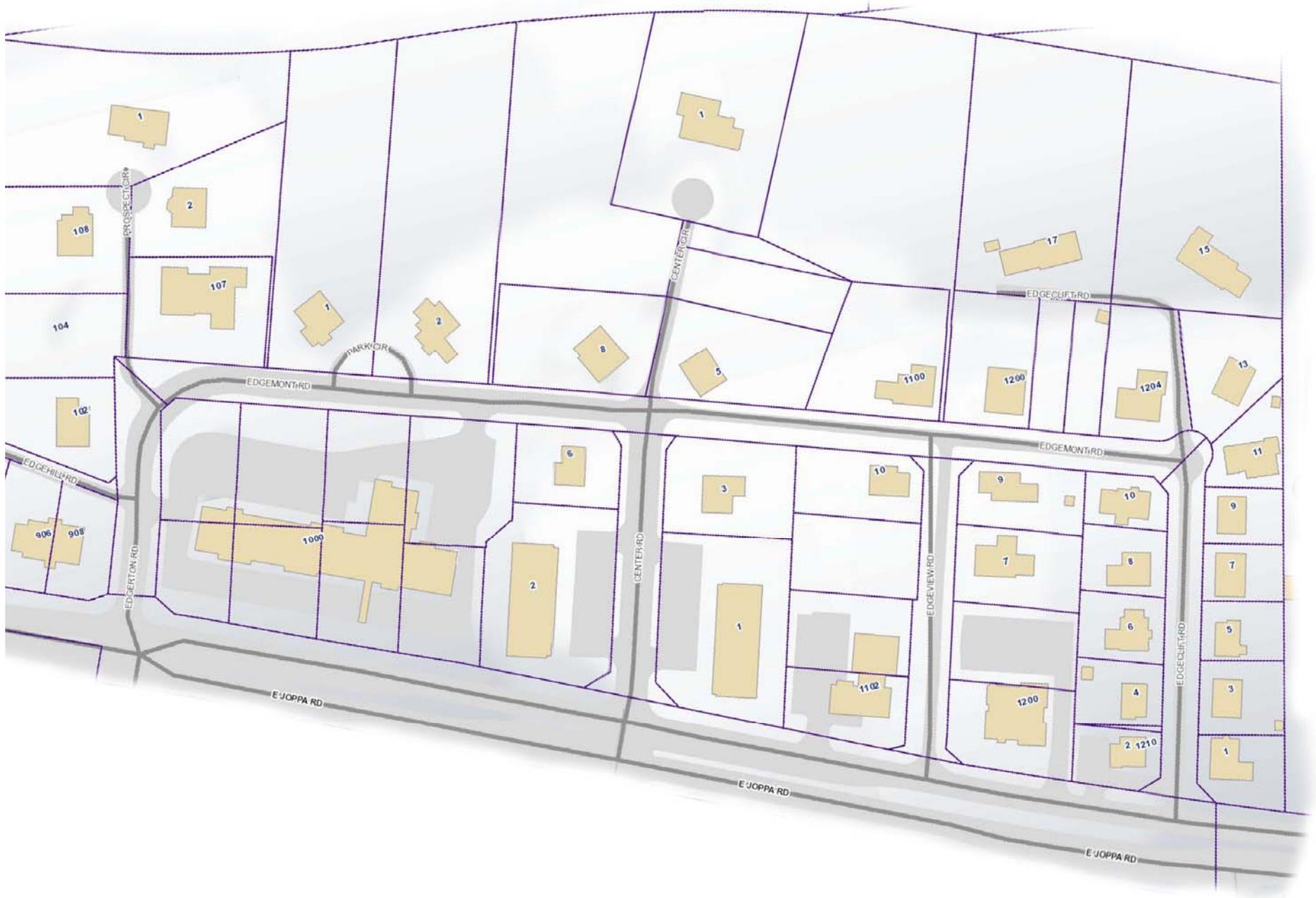
TOWSON ESTATES

MAP- Towson Estates, West



TOWSON ESTATES

MAP (cont.)– Towson Estates, East



GLOSSARY

For additional definitions see Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Owl Book Edition, 1997.

Casement Window: Window that swings open, usually hinged to the side of the opening.

Capital: The head or crowning feature of a column.

Casing: The finished visible framework around a window or door.

Cedar Shake: Thick cedar shingles split on one or both sides, typically by hand, with an irregular, rustic appearance.

Cornice: The exterior trim of a structure at the meeting of the roof and wall usually consisting of bed molding, soffit, fascia, and crown molding.

Dormer: A window placed vertically in a sloping roof and with a roof of its own.

Gable: The triangular upper portion of a wall at the end of a pitched roof.

Gambrel Roof: A roof that has two pitches at each side.

Garden Window (or Greenhouse Window): A protruding box window constructed from glass on all sides and including a sloping glass roof and interior shelves. Most commonly used in the kitchen for growing plants.

Georgian Window: A sash window featuring muntins, thick wooden casing, and deeper-than-standard reveals. Panes are typically 6-over-6 or 8-over-8.

Hipped Roof: A roof that slopes upward from all four sides of a building.

Mullion: A vertical support dividing a window or other opening into two or more parts.

Muntin: A thin strip of wood or steel used for holding panes of glass within a window sash.

Portico: An entrance porch, sometimes pedimented, and usually supported by columns.

Retaining Wall: A low wall of masonry that keeps earth in a fixed position.

Veranda: The roofed, open gallery attached to the exterior of a building.

Wood Shingles: Thin rectangular pieces of wood installed in overlapping rows to cover walls or roofs; the butt of the shingles can be cut in a variety of shapes to give a distinctive pattern to a wall surface.