



DATE: December 19, 2012

TO: Quynn Nguyen
Subdivision Review Section
Development Review Division

VIA: Frederick Stachura, HPC Coordinator
Historic Preservation Section
Countywide Planning Division

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FROM: Historic Preservation Commission

RE: 4-12004 Cafritz Property
[contains Archeological Site 18PR259; adjacent to ERCO Historic Site (68-022);
Riverdale Park (68-004); University Park (66-029); Calvert Hills (66-037) National
Register historic districts]

The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the subject application at its December 18, 2012 meeting and voted 8-0-1 (the Chairman voted "present") to forward the following findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the Planning Board for its review of Preliminary Plan 4-12004 Cafritz Property:

The HPC recommends to the Planning Board approval of preliminary plan 4-12004, Cafritz Property, with the following conditions:

1. All current plans shall be revised and all future plans for the subject property shall include the identification and boundaries of the ERCO Historic Site (68-022); the Riverdale Park (68-022); University Park (66-029); and Calvert Hills (66-037) National Register historic districts. Note 23 on the cover sheet of the Preliminary Plan shall read: "The ERCO Historic Site (68-002) is adjacent to the subject property. The Calvert Hills (66-037), Riverdale Park (68-002), University Park (66-029) National Register Historic Districts are adjacent to the subject property."
2. The Historic Preservation Commission shall review all subsequent plans of development for their impact on identified archeological features, and the impact of a potential vehicular access road and proposed buildings visible from the adjacent National Register historic districts.
3. Prior to Planning Board approval of the detailed site plan, the applicant shall provide a plan, subject to review and approval by the M-NCPPC staff archeologist for:

- a) interpretive signage to be erected and public outreach measures (based on the findings of the archeological investigations); the interpretive measures should also address the significance of the ERCO factory and the Calvert Homes development;
 - b) avoiding and preserving the ice house feature within archeological site 18PR259 in place, or
 - c) investigating the significant portions of archeological site 18PR259 at the Phase III level.
4. Prior to any ground disturbance or the approval of any grading permits, if Phase III archeological data recovery is proposed, the applicant shall
- a) provide a final report detailing the Phase II and Phase III investigations, and
 - b) ensure that all artifacts are curated at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory in Calvert County, Maryland.

Background

The subject property comprises approximately 35.83 acres, is bordered on the west by Baltimore Avenue and on the east by the CSX railroad tracks, and is located north of Tuckerman Street and south of Albion Road in Riverdale Park, Maryland. The subject application proposes a residential, commercial, hotel, and office development. Portions of archeological site 18PR259 are located on proposed lots 2 and 3.

The Engineering Research Corporation (ERCO) building (68-022), a Prince George's County Historic Site, is adjacent to the southeast portion of the subject property. Built in 1939, the ERCO building is a two-story industrial structure with a large administrative block finished in the Moderne style and a larger rear factory that is without ornamentation. This industrial building mimicked the design of contemporary transportation machinery such as ships, airplanes, and automobiles, and industrial and consumer products, such as bicycles, toasters, radios, and vacuum cleaners. Built by Henry Berliner, the ERCO plant is representative of the significant developments in aviation that took place in the county; the factory produced the Ercoupe (the first tricycle aircraft that was touted as characteristically incapable of spinning) and was later adapted to meet defense needs during World War II.

Also adjacent to the subject property are the Riverdale Park (68-004), University Park (66-029), and Calvert Hills (66-037) National Register historic districts to the south, west, and north respectively. The Riverdale Park National Register Historic District (listed December 2002) is significant as a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century railroad and streetcar suburb that surrounds the Calvert Family's Riversdale plantation house (a National Historic Landmark completed in 1807). The suburb of Riverdale Park began in earnest around 1890 and includes a range of houses that reflect late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century residential architectural preferences. The University Park Historic District (listed in October 1996; boundary expansion pending) is an early twentieth-century automobile suburb begun in 1920 that reflects middle-class residential architectural styles through World War II, and in the post-war period until 1960). The Calvert Hills National Register Historic District (listed in December 2002), formerly a part of the Calvert family's Riversdale Plantation is significant as a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century streetcar and automobile suburb. The earliest houses in Calvert Hills are from the 1890s, although the majority date from the 1920s and 1930s, and reflect the architectural taste of the pre-

World War II period. The National Register historic districts are not regulated by Subtitle 29, the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Ordinance.

The developing property was once part of Charles Benedict Calvert's Riversdale plantation. Charles Calvert donated land for and was the founder of the Maryland Agricultural College, now the University of Maryland. In addition, he served one term in the United States Congress from 1861 to 1863, representing the Sixth District of Maryland. After the death of Charles Calvert in 1864, his estate was divided among his wife and children. His son, Charles Baltimore Calvert, was allotted a tract comprising 203.5 acres that was approximately 600 yards wide and stretched from Baltimore Avenue on the west, across the Baltimore and Ohio railroad tracks to Paint Branch and Edmonston Road on the east. Calvert built a residence, known as MacAlpine, and developed a farm on his property around 1868. Calvert designed and supervised the construction of the house and the various outbuildings that included a brick cow barn, a brick icehouse, a brick carriage barn, a meat house, a smokehouse, and a wooden corn shed/wagon shed. MacAlpine was built on the site of an earlier structure, occupied by a foreman of the Riversdale estate that was destroyed by fire. An old well from the earlier structure served MacAlpine until it ran dry. A new well, pump house, and water tower were placed directly behind the house and served as the water supply until public water utilities were installed in the twentieth century.

Historic photographs of MacAlpine show that the structure was a Georgian-style brick residence with a full-length porch on the front with a central stairway and a low balustrade. The farm produced about 200 barrels of corn per year, as well as a substantial quantity of dairy products. Charles Baltimore Calvert died in 1906 and his family continued to reside at the MacAlpine estate until 1910. Between 1910 and 1917, MacAlpine was used as the Calvert family's summer residence. Charlotte Calvert Spence (a daughter of Charles Baltimore and Eleanor Calvert) and her husband, Thomas H. Spence, a Dean of the University of Maryland, moved into MacAlpine in 1917. Eleanor Calvert died in 1932 and Charlotte and Thomas Spence moved from MacAlpine in 1934. The Calvert family eventually rented the MacAlpine estate to the Longfellow School for Boys in 1934 and subsequent years.

The subject property was acquired by the federal government in 1942 and a housing development, known as Calvert Homes, was built for the defense workers in the nearby ERCO plant. All of the houses were built on concrete pads, some units containing two bedrooms and others just one. The Calvert Homes housing development was closed in 1954 and was subsequently demolished.

In 1948, the Prince George's County Board of Education purchased a 1.4-acre tract adjacent to the MacAlpine house for use as a school for the residents of Calvert Homes. After the demolition of the Calvert Homes development, the school continued to be used to educate physically handicapped children. Morris Cafritz acquired the subject property in 1960 and the property remains in the possession of the Cafritz family. The MacAlpine house was subsequently demolished and there are no remaining buildings on the subject property.

Findings

1. A Phase I archeological survey was completed on the subject property in March 2008. Two historic archeological sites were previously recorded on the property in 1984: 18PR259, the MacAlpine Mansion, and 18PR260, the Calvert Homes housing development. The Phase I investigations in 2008 combined the two sites into one site, 18PR259, that included the MacAlpine Mansion and the Calvert Homes development. Pedestrian survey identified numerous concrete pads associated with the Calvert Homes development. Several features related to the MacAlpine Mansion were also noted, including a concrete-lined cellar, a pile of bricks where a barn is thought to have been located, and an ice house. The ice house at MacAlpine is one of only

three surviving examples of the form in the county. The Riversdale Plantation was known to include several ice houses, all of which are no longer extant. Phase II investigations were recommended on the four features associated with the MacAlpine estate: the MacAlpine foundation, the ice house, the meat house and the brick barn foundation. Very little cultural material was found in association with the Calvert Homes development. Therefore, no further work was recommended in the areas associated with the 1940s housing development.

2. Phase II archeological investigations were conducted on the Cafritz property in March 2012. Portions of the MacAlpine house foundation were exposed and several 3-x-3 foot test units were excavated on the interior and exterior to determine whether earlier intact archeological deposits remained and to identify the construction techniques used for the house. The concrete cellar identified in the Phase I survey was found to be a 1940s addition to the building when it was used as an administrative office for the Calvert Homes development under the ownership of the federal government. A chimney was added to the rear of the house in the 1940s to provide additional heating and remains of the chimney flue were identified in the Phase II investigations. The areas inside and outside the foundation walls of MacAlpine were heavily disturbed by the mid-twentieth century additions and uses. In addition, one of the granite monuments marking the outlines of various tracts comprising the Riversdale plantation was found to the south of the house foundation.

Excavations around the ice house consisted of three exploratory trenches inside the structure to determine its size and its state of preservation. The upper portions of the brick-lined ice house were robbed and the opening was used as a trash dump through the 1940s and 1950s. The nature of the rubble deposit inside the ice house prevented further excavation and the base was not reached.

The area of what was identified as the bank barn in the Phase I survey was investigated with close-interval shovel testing and two test units. The west wall of a building was identified and two test units were excavated, one on the interior and one on the exterior of the building. Test unit 1, located on the exterior of the building, revealed a thick layer of demolition debris overlying the original ground surface with a 21-22 percent slope. Test unit 2 on the interior of the structure revealed a two-foot thick layer of demolition debris overlying a 0.30-foot thick ash layer. The building had a beaten earth floor. The east wall of the building was found in one of the shovel test pits. The east-west dimensions of the building were estimated to be 25 feet in width. Therefore, the building was interpreted as the carriage barn and not the bank barn.

3. The Preliminary Plan, Natural Resource Inventory and Type I Tree Conservation Plan do not show the ERCO Historic Site (68-022), the foundations related to the MacAlpine house, outbuildings and ice house, or the adjacent National Register historic districts.
4. The University of Maryland is the owner of the ERCO Historic Site (68-022), which is adjacent to the subject property. The University signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Maryland Historical Trust in November 2012 to provide for the demolition of the ERCO building due to its deteriorated condition and to provide mitigation measures for the loss of the site. Because of the anticipated demolition of the ERCO Building and the implementation of proposed mitigation measures, the proposed development will have no effect on the ERCO Historic Site.
5. The preliminary plan shows the location of a bridge across the CSX tracks at the northeast corner of the property to the American Center for Physics to the east. Details of the bridge will be provided at the time of detailed site plan. Therefore, the Historic Preservation Commission should

review the effects of this bridge on the adjacent National Register historic districts at the time of detailed site plan.

6. Tree conservation and other illustrative plans for the application indicate several potential impacts on the property: (1) substantial grading that would remove all of the trees and seemingly all of the archeological features currently identified on proposed Lots 2 and 3; (2) a vehicular connection between the subject property and the American Center for Physics property to the east by means of a flyover across the railroad right-of-way; (3) the illustrative plans for the proposed development indicate the possibility of multi-story buildings on the property that may have a visual impact on the adjacent National Register historic districts.
7. A condition of the zoning case requires the review of the preliminary plan by the Historic Preservation Commission for its impact on identified archeological features, the impact of a potential vehicular access road on the Engineering Research Corporation (ERCO) historic site (68-022), and the impact of proposed building visible from the ERCO historic site and the adjacent National Register historic districts, including recommendations as to the proposed location and options with respect to the bridge over the CSX railroad.

Conclusions

1. Phase II archeological investigations on the subject property revealed extensive disturbance to the MacAlpine House foundations, the ice house and the outbuilding to the south. The floor plans of the MacAlpine House have been sufficiently documented through historic sources and the archeological investigations. Additional excavation within and around the foundation will not provide further significant information on the operations of the farm or its period of significance. No further work is recommended on the MacAlpine house foundations.

Because of the rarity of the ice house as a structure type in Prince George's County, every effort should be made to preserve this feature in place and interpret it for the public, even though the upper portions of the brick lining were robbed. The applicant should explore the possibility of removing the debris from the interior of the ice house and reconstructing the feature to interpret to the public. At the time of detailed site plan, the applicant should provide a plan for preserving the ice house feature in place or provide justification for why the feature cannot be avoided by proposed construction. The ice house feature meets criteria A (rarity – there are only two other examples of extant ice houses in the county), B (public value - the feature was built for Charles Baltimore Calvert, whose family was instrumental in the establishment of the University of Maryland and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad), C (research value – the ice house could provide information on food preservation practices in the late 1800s and early 1900s), D (site integrity – the lower portions of the structure appear to remain intact), and E (interpretive value in place – the ice house could be used to demonstrate food preservation practices in the late 1800s and early 1900s).

The contents of the ash destruction layer within the outbuilding ruins should also be further examined to identify the contents of the building at the time of its destruction. The brick outbuilding meets criteria A (rarity – there are few all brick barns in Prince George's County) and C (research value – the ash layer within the outbuilding could provide information on farming activities on the MacAlpine farm in the 1930s). A plan for additional archeological investigations on this structure should be submitted to Historic Preservation staff prior to submission of the detailed site plan.

2. A plan for interpretive signage and other public outreach measures focused on the history and significance of the MacAlpine property and the Calvert Homes development should be developed at the time of detailed site plan.
3. The preliminary plan, Type I tree conservation plan, and Natural Resource Inventory should be revised to identify the ERCO Historic Site (68-022) adjacent to the southeast portion of the subject property, the features comprising archeological site 18PR259 on the subject property, and the adjacent National Register historic districts.