



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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APPROVED 06/16/2020

Summary of Actions

Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission
Tuesday, May 19, 2020, 6:30 p.m.
4th Floor Board Room, County Administration Building

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY VIA GOTOMEETING

Commissioners Present:	Vice Chair Lisa Pfueller Davidson, Susan Pruden, Yolanda Muckle, Aaron Marcavitch, Chairman John Peter Thompson, Royal Reff, Nathania Branch-Miles, Donna Schneider
Commissioners Absent:	N/A
HPC Counsel:	Bradley Farrar, Esq.
Staff Present:	Howard Berger, Jennifer Stabler, Tom Gross, Tyler Smith, Daniel Tana, Ashley Hall

Guest: Name/Organization	Agenda Item
Richard Biffi/OTCPHD Local Advisory Committee	C.1.
Bob Schnabel/OTCPHD Local Advisory Committee	C.1.

A. Call to Order

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Vice Chair Davidson read introductory remarks about the meeting and procedures into the record. Vice Chair Davidson chaired the meeting.

Mr. Gross briefly covered the procedures for conducting the public comments.

B. Approval of Meeting Summary – April 21, 2020

MOTION: Commissioner Pruden moved to approve the April 21, 2020 meeting summary. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schneider. The motion was approved by roll call vote and without objection (8-0).

C. Mandatory Referral

- MR-2002F, Yale Avenue Surface Parking Extension (located within the Old Town College Park Historic District, 66-042)**

Mr. Smith presented the staff report. The University of Maryland submitted materials for the construction of a 26-space parking lot within the Old Town College Park Historic District (OTCPHD, 66-042-00). The proposed parking spaces will result in a net increase of 0.21 acres of impervious surface. The applicant has noted that the parking will be for University of Maryland pick-up trucks that have difficulty parking in the garage located nearby because of their size. The site is currently open green space bordered by a sidewalk and an existing parking lot to the east, and multi-story fraternity and sorority buildings to the north and south. No new driveways are proposed from Yale Avenue as the parking will be accessed from the existing parking lot to the east. Proposed site improvements will also include lighting, landscaping, and stormwater management. The addition of surface parking within the Historic District is generally discouraged because of the Historic District's residential character and, as it is in conflict with the preservation of the natural beauty of the Historic District, one of the goals of the OTCPHD Design Guidelines. The OTCPHD Local Advisory Committee (LAC) voted 3-0 in opposition of the project submittal because it is visually detrimental to the residential character of the neighborhood and it does not comport with residential landscaping within the neighborhood. The LAC recommended that the applicant provide a sufficient vegetation buffer that should include tall hedges and/or a wall to increase the visual barrier from the street. The LAC's recommendation stated that if the project is to move forward, the LAC would like to recommend the following improvements to the project:

- a. Provide a sufficient vegetation buffer.
- b. Have an increase in a visible barrier from the street.
- c. Deepen the buffer with thick and tall hedges and/or an architectural hardscape wall as a barrier.

While the OTCPHD Design Guidelines do not directly address parking facilities of this nature, the submitted materials are generally compatible with the Guidelines' recommendations on the treatment of off-street parking. The proposed project accomplishes this goal through the provision of vehicular access via existing driveways east of the developing site and through the provision of landscape screening. Based on staff's review of the potential impacts of the subject Mandatory Referral application on the OTCPHD, Historic Preservation Section staff recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board that MR-2002F be approved as submitted, and with notice of the OTCPHD LAC's comments on the application.

Mr. Richard Biffel, chairman of the OTCPHD LAC, stated that the LAC determined that this project is not compatible with the OTCPHD. He indicated that the lot proposed to be developed, within what is colloquially known as the "graham cracker", is surrounded by residential development. He stated that the proposed parking lot does not serve the surrounding sorority houses and is not compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood, and that it would take away green space that helps to beautify the neighborhood. He indicated that the LAC has not been provided with elevation drawings or a final plan showing if visual screening will be implemented. He indicated that he is also concerned with the safety impact of the proposal, and that having a parking lot with trucks close to a sidewalk introduces visual obstruction of potential danger that would be more readily observed from an empty green space. He stated that the more immediate issue is the visual impact of the proposal. He stated that the Design Guidelines for College Park indicate that proposed parking should service the uses within the district and indicate that large parking areas are not in line with the character of the historic district and are, in fact, contrary.

Vice Chair Davidson asked whether, at the time, this proposal was presented to the LAC during their meeting, they had reviewed a site plan and a list of plant species proposed for screening. Mr. Biffel confirmed that this was correct.

Mr. Bob Schnabel, a member of the OTCPHD LAC and former HPC commissioner, indicated that at the recent LAC meeting they reviewed the proposed parking expansion and voted unanimously to oppose the

project. He indicated that the existing lot is not landscaped, and that parking lots are usually an unwelcomed necessity and usually ugly. Mr. Schnabel stated that the LAC believes that the parking lot expansion would be visually detrimental to the residential character of the neighborhood and is a misuse of land in a residentially focused historic district, and that the landscaped buffer area is insufficient to adequately screen the proposed parking area. He indicated that he is concerned with the additional problem of runoff from the expanded impervious surface area, which will exacerbate an existing runoff problem that has created severe flooding in the Old Town and Calvert Hills neighborhoods. He stated that the LAC also recommended that if the project moves forward, the landscape buffer should be expanded to be substantially deeper than the proposed plan, and/or a designed articulated brick wall or similar elevated hardscape architecture should be added to help screen this large expanse of parking from view. He stated that pierced pavers could be used in lieu of impervious pavement, which could help address the stormwater runoff concerns and provide more of a green space effect.

Commissioner Pruden asked about the ingress and egress access areas that are being proposed. Mr. Smith indicated that the trucks would access the proposed parking lot from the east from Princeton Avenue. Chairman Thompson asked if staff had comments on the LAC's interpretation of the Old Town College Park Historic District Design Guidelines with regard to parking areas. Mr. Smith indicated that he felt the LAC's interpretation was reasonable, and that the design guidelines do not specifically call out proposals similar to the proposed parking lot project. Mr. Smith indicated that the design guidelines mostly address residential development.

MOTION: Commissioner Pruden moved to recommend disapproval of Mandatory Referral MR-2002F as submitted to the Planning Board. Commissioner Marcavitch seconded the motion. Commissioner Pruden indicated that she is appalled by the proposal for all of the reasons mentioned, and that she was not persuaded by the suggestion of the addition of landscape buffers. Commissioner Marcavitch indicated that he would like to see a proposal that addresses the type of paving and buffering proposed. He indicated that he would like to see the implementation of pervious surfacing and a screening wall that could be integrated with the landscaping. He then indicated that as the proposal currently stands, he could not support it. Mr. Gross reminded the commissioners about the Mandatory Referral process, and indicated that both the HPC's and the Planning Board's comments would be advisory only. Commissioner Marcavitch asked if it would be better to recommend approval of the proposal with changes, or to recommend disapproval of the proposal as submitted. Mr. Smith indicated that it was his thought that staff's recommendation of approval would be accompanied by the LAC's comments, and indicated that the motion could include specific language from the LAC's comments. Commissioner Reff asked if Mr. Smith's suggestion would be the same as recommending disapproval with the LAC's notice. Mr. Gross indicated that the motion is the HPC's to craft however they determine is appropriate. The motion was denied by roll call vote (1-6-1, Commissioner Pruden voted "yes" and Vice Chair Davidson voted "present"). Commissioner Marcavitch moved that the HPC recommend to the Planning Board that MR-2002F be approved with modifications to provide sufficient vegetation buffer, provide an architectural hardscape wall as a barrier, and with the OTCPHD LAC's comments on the application. Commissioner Branch-Miles and Commissioner Muckle seconded the motion. Commissioner Pruden stated that she took issue with the word "sufficient" and was concerned with how the sufficiency of the vegetation buffer would be determined, and by whom. The second motion was approved by roll call vote and with two objections (5-2-1, Commissioners Reff and Pruden voted "no" and Vice Chair Davidson voted "present").

D. Update from Department of Parks & Recreation

Mr. Gross presented the update from the Department of Parks & Recreation. Mr. Gross indicated that interior and exterior work is ongoing at Oxon Hill Manor (80-001), including erosion control in the rear

garden. He indicated that work is ongoing to investigate the structural condition of the Peace Cross (69-016) and work towards a scope of work for repairs.

Commissioner Schneider asked if any updates were available regarding Concord. Mr. Gross indicated that there were no major developments to report, and the investigation of contamination in the basement and other work is ongoing.

E. Commission Staff Items

1. HAWP Staff Sign Offs

There were no further questions.

2. Properties of Concern

Mr. Gross stated that there was nothing new of note to present regarding the properties of concern. There were no further questions.

3. Referrals Report

There were no further questions.

4. Correspondence Report – No Correspondence Report

5. New Business/Staff Updates

Dr. Stabler presented an update on an ongoing archaeological investigation occurring in Bowie at the Mill Branch site, located on the east side of Crain Highway (U.S. Route 301) and to the north of Mill Branch Road. Commissioner Marcavitch asked about the proposed development for the Mill Branch site. Dr. Stabler provided some information on the development plan and indicated that the site would not be preserved.

Commissioner Marcavitch indicated that a webinar on preservation “good stories” of the year would take place in lieu of the cancelled Preservation Month reception.

The record was closed for public comment. The record was reopened.

MOTION: Commissioner Pruden moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by all Commissioners. The motion was approved by acclamation and without objection (8-0). The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ashley Sayward Hall
Principal Planning Technician
Historic Preservation Section