



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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APPROVED 1/16/2024

Summary of Actions

Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission
Tuesday, December 19, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS

Commissioners Present: Chair John Peter Thompson, Jane Carpenter-Rock, Ph.D., Pamela Jenkins, Arlisha Norwood, Ph.D., Kelly Porter, Susan Pruden, Royal Reff

HPC Counsel: Bradley Farrar, Esq.

Staff Present: Tom Gross, Jennifer Stabler, Ph.D., Daniel Tana, Kacy Rohn, Amelia Chisholm, Janet Adesina, Natalie Zalc, Tyler Smith

Guest: Name/Organization	Agenda Item
Miriam Bader	C.1-3
Maxine Gross	C.1-3
Dr. Quint Gregory	C.1-3
Dr. Llatetra Brown Esters	C.1-3
Councilmember Susan Whitney	C.1-3
Cameron Duncan/ Dept. of Parks and Recreation	D
Kofi Ansu/ Dept. of Parks and Recreation	D
Robert Thurston	C.1-3
Alvin McNeal/ Dept. of Parks and Recreation	D
Bridget Stesney/ Dept. of Parks and Recreation	D
Sylvan Miles/ Dept. of Parks and Recreation	D
Edward Day/ Dept. of Parks and Recreation	D
Anne Holtz Schmick/ Dept. of Parks and Recreation	D
Bill Tyler/Dept. of Parks and Recreation	D
Trevor Munoz	C.1-3
Dr. Mary Sies	C.1-3

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Rohn read introductory remarks about the meeting and procedures into the record.

Commissioner Norwood joined the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

B. APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY – November 21, 2023

MOTION: Commissioner Reff moved to approve the November 21, 2023, meeting summary. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carpenter-Rock. The motion was approved by roll call vote and without objection (7-0).

**Agenda item D was heard before agenda items C.1-3 due to a time constraint on the part of Department of Parks and Recreation staff.

D. UPDATE FROM DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

Alvin McNeal, Deputy Director for Administration and Development, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), introduced Bill Tyler, Director of DPR, who thanked the HPC for inviting DPR to speak at the meeting.

Mr. McNeal provided the background and summary of a 2017 report prepared by Davis Buckley Architects & Planners, which provided a budget, property condition assessments, and maintenance and repair recommendations for historic sites within DPR's inventory.

Bridget Stesney, Division Chief for Capital Planning and Development, DPR, reviewed the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which supports the budget for historic preservation processes and programs.

Kofi Ansu, DPR, provided an update on Adelphi Mill. The current scope of work includes structural reinforcement of the first story wood beams and posts; repair of a basement window; refinishing flooring on the second and third floors; and replacement of the chimney flashing. A permit has been submitted to the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE), which they anticipate will be approved by summer 2024. Construction is anticipated to be completed in January 2025. There is additional work needed once further funding is available. Chairman Thompson asked DPR what work has been done since 2017 to maintain and prevent further deterioration of this structure. Mr. Ansu explained that facilities staff enter the facility regularly to monitor for further deterioration. Chairman Thompson asked Mr. Ansu to clarify whether that indicates that no work has been completed between 2017 and 2022 and that no further deterioration has occurred. Mr. Ansu indicated that only minimal further deterioration took place. DPR is waiting for DPIE's approval of a permit by summer 2024. Chairman Thompson confirmed with staff that no related Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) has been submitted for review. DPR staff confirmed that a HAWP application will be submitted.

Kofi Ansu, DPR, provided an update on Concord Manor. He stated the project is split into two phases: 1) stabilization, structural repairs, and upgrades to prevent water intrusion; and 2) interior renovations and site utilities. Work completed so far includes temporary roof repair and chimney stabilization, structural investigation of the north porch, and DPIE approval of the permit for Phase 1. It is currently under review with the Maryland Historical Trust. Concurrently, planning for Phase 2 is underway to introduce utilities and prepare for interpretation of the site. Internal discussion of interior program spaces and archaeological investigation are in progress. For Phase 2, all permits and approvals are expected to be obtained by Summer 2024. Chairman Thompson

asked DPR when work will actually be initiated after ten years of no apparent progress. Mr. Ansu explained that information has been submitted to MHT and they hope for approval within weeks, which will allow them to order the materials needed to meet an anticipated completion date of early 2025. Chairman Thompson confirmed with staff that a HAWP will still be required following MHT approval.

Sylvan Miles, DPR, provided an update on Riversdale Mansion. The current building envelope project addresses high-priority items that were identified in the Davis Buckley report, including water infiltration investigation. After test pits demonstrated that the existing foundation, waterproofing, and drainage were in good working condition, a mechanical system assessment was conducted in 2022. This assessment indicated that the existing geothermal system was overburdened, resulting in a budget request for updated HVAC equipment to supplement the existing system. Related work includes paint removal, repair, and repainting to address moisture within the walls, and installation of removable interior storm windows. DPR has received MHT approval and will be submitting a Historic Area Work Permit application in January 2024. The work is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2024. Subsequent discussion clarified that removal of the existing pea gravel base and installation of the proposed Gravel-Lok system will require a HAWP and possible archaeological monitoring. Commissioner Porter confirmed with Mr. Miles that the Gravel-Lok will provide adequate drainage.

Cameron Duncan, DPR, provided an update on Oxon Hill Manor. The current project scope includes the rehabilitation of the roof and drainage. Fiscal Year 2025 funds have been received to proceed with the work for the roof and drainage issues. Regulatory approvals from Maryland Historical Trust, HPC, and DPIE have been received. Long lead-time materials have been procured. Structural repairs to the north servant's wing attic have been completed. DPR is currently finalizing the construction contract. Construction is expected to begin in May 2024 and last for a year. Future anticipated work includes reconstruction of the portico balustrades, interior finishes, and possible HVAC refurbishment.

Cameron Duncan, DPR, provided an update on Compton Bassett Manor. Temporary stabilization and scaffolding were completed in 2022. DPR requested funding in the FY 2025 CIP. Anticipated future work includes completion of a Historic Structures Report, total rehabilitation of the house's exterior and interior, and assessing the condition of the chapel's masonry. Chairman Thompson noted the long period of time that has passed without action since the initial 2017 assessment. Mr. Duncan noted that DPR has begun to share CIP funding with NHRD for work on the site's outbuildings. Chairman Thompson encouraged the sharing of funding and resources across divisions to get the needed work accomplished. Commissioner Reff asked DPR staff to discuss their confidence in the funding requests that have been made and if the HPC can support their recommendations in some way. Alvin McNeal discussed how the CIP budget operates in relation to the operating budget to support large and small projects at historic properties. Chairman Thompson noted that much of the needed work could be classed as maintenance rather than as capital projects, and asked whether that could influence the way that funding is allocated. Commissioner Reff seconded this question and asked for more regular updates, which Mr. McNeal agreed to provide. Commissioner Jenkins raised the issue of demolition by neglect. Commissioner Pruden stated that it would be worthwhile for the HPC to visit the properties in question. Mr. McNeal offered to coordinate with staff to provide a tour for the Commissioners.

C.1. HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION, Nancy Tabbs House (Documented Property 66-000-01)

Ms. Adesina presented. The subject historic property evaluation was requested by the property owner, Maxine Gross.

The c. 1935 house at 5011 Navahoe Street is a Tudor Revival-style, one-and-a-half story, side-gabled brick building on a raised concrete basement, with a non-historic addition built circa 2003. The three-bay north-facing façade is dominated by a single front-facing gable with a steeply pitched, asymmetrical roofline and a simple round-arched doorway accessed by a 4-step circular riser.

The original structure sits on a concrete foundation and is uniformly clad in a running bond brick veneer, apart from a decorative basketweave belt course reflecting the raised basement. Fenestration patterns appear intact, but windows are primarily non-historic one-over-one vinyl sash windows with brick sills and steel lintels. The roof is clad in three-tab asphalt shingles, with a gutter and downspouts on the front façade. The building has an exterior end chimney on the west elevation which projects above the roof's ridgeline.

The Nancy Tabbs House is located at 5011 Navahoe Street in the Lakeland area of College Park. The house retains its historic function as a single-family residence. The 0.266-acre trapezoidal site is relatively flat and surrounded by vegetation, with a gravel driveway and a concrete sidewalk connecting the house's entry stairs to the public sidewalk and road. The building's façade is oriented to the north, facing Navahoe Street, and the surrounding area is characterized by single-family residential development. The house sits near historically prominent community landmarks, including the First Baptist Church of Lakeland and the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and Lakeland Road, a former streetcar corridor.

In 1890, Edwin A. Newman subdivided approximately 200 acres of land just north of the Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland, College Park) and platted the new subdivision of Lakeland. Newman envisioned a resort community anchored by the nearby manmade lake, which he named Lake Artemesia. Despite initial enthusiasm, it quickly became apparent that the low-lying land was highly flood-prone and poorly suited for development.

Beginning in 1900, the demographics of Lakeland began to shift as Black families, previously segregated on the east side of the B&O Railroad tracks, began to move to the west side of Lakeland. As African Americans increasingly settled in western Lakeland, white families departed. By the first quarter of the twentieth century, Lakeland was well established as a thriving Black community with schools, churches, and social and commercial facilities.

Cornelius Tabbs and Nancy Gross were born in Calvert County, Maryland in 1861 and 1870, respectively. They were married in 1896 and moved to Lakeland sometime in the 1900s, making them among the first African Americans to settle in the community. They had two children, though only their daughter, Jane, remained with them. The Tabbs family lived in a rented property in Lakeland in 1920 and then in a house that they owned in 1930. Cornelius Tabbs was the family's

primary bread winner and worked as a farm laborer and later as a janitor at the University of Maryland, while his daughter, Jane, worked as a cleaner with the Pullman Company. Cornelius Tabbs purchased Lots 9 and 10 from the Van Valkenburg family in 1918 and transferred the property to Nancy Tabbs between 1930 and 1940. At some point in the 1930s, he disappears from the family's records.

In 1935, Nancy Tabbs contracted with Romulus C. Archer, Jr. for the construction of the house at 5011 Navahoe Street. Archer was an African American architect based in Washington, D.C. He had trained as an architect through the International Correspondence Schools of Scranton, Pennsylvania, and finished his formal education at Columbia University. Archer enlisted in the U.S. Army during World Wars I & II. On January 15, 1926, he was professionally licensed by the D.C. Board of Examiners and Registrars of Architects, making him only the second Black architect to be licensed in the city. He eventually established his own architectural firm and designed several significant buildings in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, including two that have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Archer was known for his mentorship of younger African American architects and was recognized with the YMCA "Citizen of the Year," award in 1964.

Archer designed Nancy Tabbs's house as a Tudor Revival-style building. Surviving labor and materials specifications for the building detail the specific requirements that he established for its construction. The nine-page document stipulates details of the work to be carried out by the builder, including excavation, masonry, carpentry, joinery, painting, and electrical work.

Given the loss of Cornelius Tabbs's income in the period of this house's construction, Nancy Tabbs may have partly financed the building of the new house through two mortgages taken out against the property in 1936, for a total of \$3,500. Her primary source of income once living in the home came from tenants, who lived in the house and appear on the U.S. census records in 1940 and 1950.

Nancy Tabbs lived at the 5011 Navahoe Street house until her death in 1962, when she left the property to her nieces Viola Gross and Margaret Gray. Following her death, Lot 9 was sold and is no longer in the ownership of the Gross family.

This unique architectural edifice allowed Nancy Tabbs (née Gross) and then her niece, Viola Gross, the ability to remain in the community through the widescale demolitions and displacement brought about by the Lakeland Urban Renewal project of the late 1960s to early 1980s. The home remains in family ownership today.

The Nancy Tabbs House is significant as a reflection of the development of the Lakeland community, the heritage of the Gross and Tabbs families, and the entrepreneurial spirit and innovative mindset of Black women during a period of intense racial segregation. The property is also significant as a representation of the work of Romulus C. Archer, Jr., the second African American to be licensed as an architect in Washington, D.C. Archer was involved in numerous religious and residential projects in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, two of which are listed to the National Register of Historic Places. The Nancy Tabbs House reflects a rare instance

of Tudor Revival architecture within the African American community of Lakeland, which lost much of its early architectural heritage through the process of urban renewal.

The Nancy Tabbs House retains sufficient physical integrity to convey its historical and architectural significance. It sits in its original location on a residential block and therefore retains integrity of location and setting. The resource reflects a moderate degree of integrity of materials, workmanship, and design. Significant exterior changes include the replacement of most original windows and the main entrance door, the reconstruction of the entrance stairs, and the non-historic addition at the rear. Despite these changes, the original form and Tudor Revival style as designed by architect Romulus C. Archer, Jr. remain evident. The rear addition is clearly subordinate to the original structure. The property remains in the Gross family's possession, and the nearby homes built by family relations are extant, granting the property integrity of feeling and association.

Historic Preservation Commission Policy #1-87, "Evaluating Integrity, Degree of Alteration, and Scarcity and Frequency," states that a property's integrity should be considered in the context of the scarcity of the resource type it represents, with a less restrictive standard of integrity applied when few or no other similar properties exist in the Inventory of Historic Resources. The Nancy Tabbs House conveys underrepresented historical themes related to family and community history of Lakeland, African American women's entrepreneurship, is the work of an early, notable Black architect. These themes are not currently well represented in Prince George's County's Inventory of Historic Resources. Within Lakeland, only the Lakeland High School, an institutional resource, has been designated as a Historic Site.

Despite some changes to its exterior materials and appearance, the subject property retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a building designed by a master architect, a reflection of the resilience of the Lakeland community, and Nancy Tabbs's influence as a Black woman in the economy of an African American community.

Staff concluded that the Nancy Tabbs House meets five of the nine historic site designation criteria of Subtitle 29-104(a): Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iii), (1)(A)(iv), (2)(A)(i), (2)(A)(ii), and (2)(A)(v).

Staff further concluded that, in weighing both the alterations that have been made to the house and the current representation of the resource type within the Inventory of Historic Resources, the Nancy Tabbs House can be found to possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent, or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant.

Staff recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board and District Council that the Nancy Tabbs House, Documented Property 66-000-01, and its 0.266-acre Environmental Setting (Lot 10 of Block 13, "Lakeland"), be designated a Prince George's County Historic Site as meeting the following criteria in Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iii), (1)(A)(iv), (2)(A)(i), (2)(A)(ii), and (2)(A)(v).

Maxine Gross, the property owner, thanked the Chairman, HPC, and the Lakeland Community Heritage Project for their work and efforts in honoring the heritage and history of the Lakeland community. She supports the designation of the three properties as Prince George's County Historic Sites.

Susan Whitney, Councilmember of District 2 in the City of College Park, thanked the HPC for its time and consideration and the work it does to protect the County's history. She supports the staff's recommendation to grant historic designation to the three Lakeland properties.

MOTION: Commissioner Pruden moved that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board and District Council that the Nancy Tabbs House, Documented Property 66-000-01, and its 0.266-acre Environmental Setting (Lot 10 of Block 13, "Lakeland"), be designated a Prince George's County Historic Site as meeting the following criteria in Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iii), (1)(A)(iv), (2)(A)(i), (2)(A)(ii), and (2)(A)(v). Commissioner Porter seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote and without objection (6-0). Commissioner Carpenter-Rock was having internet connectivity issues and was not present to vote.

C.3. HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION, George and Agnes Gross House (Documented Property 66-000-03)

** Agenda item C.3. was heard prior to item C.2. to preserve the chronological order of the historic contexts of the three sites in question.

Ms. Rohn presented. The subject historic property evaluation was requested by the property owner, Delmax, LLC, the members of which are Maxine Gross and Delphine Gross.

The home at 8002 54th Avenue was built for George Henry Gross, Jr. and Agnes Gross in 1970. The home is a one-story, ranch style dwelling on a raised basement. It is a block building clad in brick veneer and sheltered by a side-gabled, architectural asphalt-shingled roof, which projects to cover a partial porch extending across the southern half of the home's façade. Fenestration consists primarily of six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash windows, shielded by aluminum storm windows, and paneled wooden doors. Most materials appear unaltered from the time of the house's construction.

The George Henry and Agnes Gross House is located at 8002 54th Avenue in the Lakeland area of College Park. The house retains its historic function as a single-family residence. The 0.186-acre trapezoidal parcel includes the house and a flat, open lawn. The property is bounded by 54th Avenue to the east, and single-family dwellings to the north, south, and west.

The home's façade is oriented to the east, facing 54th Avenue, and is set back approximately 35 feet from the public sidewalk. The parcel is fenced on the north, west, and south sides, and a concrete path and driveway provide access to the lot from the street.

In 1890, Edwin A. Newman subdivided approximately 200 acres of land just north of the Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland, College Park) and platted the new subdivision of Lakeland. Newman envisioned a resort community anchored by the nearby manmade lake, which he named Lake Artemesia. Despite initial enthusiasm, it quickly became apparent that the low-lying land was highly flood-prone and poorly suited for development.

Beginning in 1900, the demographics of Lakeland began to shift as Black families, previously segregated on the east side of the B&O Railroad tracks, began to move to the west side of

Lakeland. As African Americans increasingly settled in western Lakeland, white families departed. By the first quarter of the twentieth century, Lakeland was well established as a thriving Black community with schools, churches, and social and commercial facilities.

Among the early Black residents to settle in the central part of Lakeland were George H. Gross and Rosa Gross, who lived in the community by 1900. The Grosses built a family home at 5100 Pierce Avenue, which still stands today. They raised five children in Lakeland while George Sr. was employed by the railroad and Rosa managed the household and worked as a laundress, both in her home and at the university.

George Henry Gross, Jr., was born in Lakeland to George Henry and Rosa Gross on July 3, 1904. He grew up in Lakeland and in 1923, at age 19, began a career with the Maryland Agricultural College, a major employer for the Lakeland community. In 1925, he married Agnes Harrison, who had grown up in nearby Muirkirk.

George Henry and Agnes Gross purchased their first home on Cloud Avenue, in Lakeland, in 1929. They resided there for over forty years and established themselves as parents, employees, and active citizens of the Lakeland community. Their son, Elwood Gross, was born in the home on December 4, 1933. George Henry Gross, Jr. had a 48-year career with the Maryland Agricultural College's Dining Services Department. He walked, or in the times he had a car, drove to work in the dining hall on campus. The work was steady but not very well paid – George Henry worked at the university for many years before Black employees were fairly compensated with pay and benefits equivalent to their white co-workers.

Agnes Gross was employed in a series of jobs as a cook, including as a cafeteria manager at the all-white Riverdale Elementary School and as a cook in a university sorority house. Lakelanders' employment with the university offered stability and insulated the community from the worst of the Great Depression. In the summer, Agnes sometimes traveled with her son Elwood to upstate New York to work as a cook for the family with whom George Henry's sister Margaret Gray lived as a companion and housekeeper. In addition to the extra income, these trips provided both Agnes and Elwood the opportunity for summer recreation and to spend time in a less rigidly segregated environment. Agnes Gross played a prominent role in the Lakeland community through her leadership in the Embry A.M.E. Church and was active in the women's social and neighborhood clubs which led community decision-making.

George Henry and Agnes Gross's long-term home on Cloud Avenue was demolished c. 1970 after the Prince George's County Board of Education selected their block as the site for the new, integrated Paint Branch Elementary School, although abundant vacant land existed nearby. The Grosses acquiesced to the relocation, despite the financial and emotional loss, in order to keep an elementary school within the community. The poor compensation offered for their property left limited resources with which to build a new home. The modest dwelling at 8002 54th Avenue, built in 1970, nevertheless allowed them the ability to remain in their community through the widescale demolitions and displacement brought about by the Lakeland Urban Renewal project of the late 1960s to early 1980s.

George and Agnes Gross's lives spanned the vast transformations in Lakeland in the twentieth century, from the first African Americans to start families in the community to the irreversible demolition caused by urban renewal. In a changed landscape, they lived the remainder of their lives at their home at 8002 54th Avenue. George Henry Gross, Jr. died in 1989, and Agnes Gross in 1992. The property remains in family ownership.

The George Henry and Agnes Gross House is significant as a reflection of the resilience of the African American community of Lakeland in the face of discriminatory public policy. George Henry and Agnes Gross were early Lakeland residents who supported the community's growth and prosperity and advocated for Lakeland residents on key issues facing the community, notably school desegregation and urban renewal. The dwelling's small scale and modest appearance reflect the limited compensation historically offered to Black residents displaced by public infrastructure projects.

The George Henry and Agnes Gross House retains sufficient physical integrity to convey its architectural and historical significance. The property remains in its original location on a single-family residential lot in Lakeland, and therefore retains its integrity of location and setting. The exterior of the dwelling is essentially unaltered since the time of its construction in 1970, except for the replacement of several basement-level windows. It reflects a high degree of integrity of materials, workmanship, and design. The property remains in Gross family ownership, and adjacent houses built by family relations are extant, granting the property integrity of feeling and association.

Historic Preservation Commission Policy #1-87, "Evaluating Integrity, Degree of Alteration, and Scarcity and Frequency," states that a property's integrity should be considered in the context of the scarcity of the resource type it represents, with a less restrictive standard of integrity applied when few or no other similar properties exist in the Inventory of Historic Resources. The George Henry and Agnes Gross House conveys historical themes related to family and community history of Lakeland and the African American experience of urban renewal, which are underrepresented in Prince George's County's Inventory of Historic Resources. Within Lakeland, only the Lakeland High School, an institutional resource, has been designated as a Historic Site.

Considering the minor changes that have occurred to the exterior materials and appearance, the subject property retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as reflection of the resilience of the African American community of Lakeland in the face of discriminatory public policy and the influence of George Henry and Agnes Gross on key issues facing the community in the mid-to-late twentieth century.

Staff concluded that the George Henry and Agnes Gross House meets four of the nine historic site designation criteria of Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iii); (1)(A)(iv); (2)(A)(i); and (2)(A)(v).

Staff further concluded that, in weighing both the alterations that have been made to the house and the current representation of the resource type within the Inventory of Historic Resources, the George Henry and Agnes Gross House can be found to possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent, or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant.

Staff recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board and District Council that the George Henry and Agnes Gross House, Documented Property 66-000-03, and its 0.186-acre Environmental Setting (Lot 2 of Block 3, “Lakeland”), be designated a Prince George’s County Historic Site as meeting the following criteria in Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iii); (1)(A)(iv); (2)(A)(i); and (2)(A)(v).

MOTION: Commissioner Carpenter-Rock moved that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board and District Council that the George Henry and Agnes Gross House, Documented Property 66-000-03, and its 0.186-acre Environmental Setting (Lot 2 of Block 3, “Lakeland”), be designated a Prince George’s County Historic Site as meeting the following criteria in Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iii); (1)(A)(iv); (2)(A)(i); and (2)(A)(v). Commissioner Jenkins seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote and without objection (7-0).

C.2. HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION, Elwood and Wilmer Gross House (Documented Property 66-000-02)

Ms. Rohn presented. The subject historic property evaluation was requested by the property owner, the estate of Wilmer S. Gross, represented by Maxine Gross.

The Elwood and Wilmer Gross House at 5110 Pierce Avenue is a contemporary-style tri-level Split-Level dwelling built in 1962. The home is an intact “Capri” model kit house, sold by Swift Homes, Inc. The dwelling is of frame construction on a block foundation. It is clad in brick veneer on its lowest level, horizontal aluminum-clad cedar siding on the middle level, and a mix of horizontal and vertical board-and-batten aluminum-clad cedar siding on its upper level. The home retains its original wood-frame picture windows and horizontal two-over-two sash windows and is capped with a characteristic low-pitched hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves, sheathed in three-tab asphalt shingles.

The Elwood and Wilmer Gross House sits on a corner lot at 5110 Pierce Avenue in the Lakeland neighborhood of College Park, Maryland. The house retains its historic function as a single-family residence. The 0.241-acre square-shaped parcel includes the house, a gently sloped grassy front lawn, and a rear garden designed and cultivated by Wilmer Gross for over forty years. The property is bounded by Pierce Avenue to the south, 54th Avenue to the east, and single-family dwellings to the north and west.

In 1890, Edwin A. Newman subdivided approximately 200 acres of land just north of the Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland, College Park) and platted the new subdivision of Lakeland. Newman envisioned a resort community anchored by the nearby manmade lake, which he named Lake Artemesia. Despite initial enthusiasm, it quickly became apparent that the low-lying land was highly flood-prone and poorly suited for development.

Beginning in 1900, the demographics of Lakeland began to shift as Black families, previously segregated on the east side of the B&O Railroad tracks, began to move to the west side of Lakeland. As African Americans increasingly settled in western Lakeland, white families departed.

By the first quarter of the twentieth century, Lakeland was well established as a thriving Black community with schools, churches, and social and commercial facilities.

Among the early Black residents to settle in the central part of Lakeland were George H. Gross and Rosa Gross, the paternal grandparents of Elwood Gross, who lived in the community by 1900. The Grosses built a family home at 5100 Pierce Avenue, which still stands today. They raised five children in Lakeland while George Sr. was employed by the railroad and Rosa managed the household and worked as a laundress, both in her home and at the university. George Henry Gross, Jr., Elwood Gross's father, was born to George Henry and Rosa Gross on July 3, 1904.

George Henry Gross, Jr. married Agnes Harrison, of Muirkirk, in 1925. The couple purchased a house on Cloud Avenue, in Lakeland, in 1929. Elwood Gross was born in the home on December 4, 1933. He enjoyed a rich childhood and young adulthood despite the pervasive racism which surrounded the Lakeland community. The neighborhood's bus and streetcar service gave young people access to recreational opportunities that were not available in segregated College Park, including restaurants and dance halls in Fairmount Heights and baseball and football games at Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C.

After graduating from high school, Elwood Gross enrolled in St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville, VA, a historically Black private college founded in 1883. There, he met his future wife, Wilmer Venetia Sydnor. Wilmer Sydnor was born January 5, 1937, in Richmond, Virginia. Her mother, Ella Sydnor, prioritized her children's education and began teaching Wilmer reading, writing, and math before she began school. At a time when many other children frequently missed days or weeks in the classroom to help their families earn a living, she was encouraged to focus on her education.

After college, c. 1957, Elwood Gross was drafted into the U.S. Army and spent two years in military service. After his service, he moved to Chicago, where he and Wilmer were married. They spent several years living on Chicago's west side before the birth of their twin daughters, Maxine and Delphine. While on a return visit with family in Lakeland, Elwood Gross enquired about employment opportunities for mechanics at the University of Maryland and found a position with the Physical Plant unit. The family moved back from Chicago into his parents' home on Cloud Avenue.

Shortly thereafter, in 1962, George Henry and Agnes Gross, Elwood Gross's parents, gifted the couple the undeveloped property at 5110 Pierce Avenue. Using the land as collateral, Elwood and Wilmer Gross purchased a tri-level Split-Level kit house sold by Ritchie Swift Homes, Inc., a local subsidiary of a national pre-cut housing manufacturer. Swift Homes laborers laid the foundation and built the shell of the building, and the remaining work was done by Elwood Gross, working late nights after his workday, with the help of Lakeland community members knowledgeable in the building trades.

In Lakeland, Wilmer Gross found employment with the post office and then the Patent Office of the U.S. Department of Commerce. She commuted to Washington, D.C. by streetcar and worked for the federal government until her retirement. In her new home, she pursued her passion for gardening by carefully planning and cultivating the home's landscape for over forty years. Later in

life, Wilmer Gross also volunteered for her community with long term service on the City of College Park's Committee for a Better Environment.

Elwood Gross served a long career at the University of Maryland and represented the third generation of his family to be employed on campus. He advanced over time from his start as a mechanic's helper to Assistant Director of the Physical Plant unit. He served for a time as president of the Lakeland Civic Association and was deeply engaged in the Lakeland Urban Renewal project as a member of the Project Area Committee (PAC).

The PAC was a local body established to liaise with the municipality and federal Housing and Urban Development officials through the redevelopment process. Through his work on the PAC, Elwood Gross saw firsthand the ways in which the project's final scope shifted away from Lakelanders' original vision for community revitalization. Over 80 households were displaced from the project area, and many never returned. The widescale demolitions and displacement that affected Lakeland in the mid-to-late twentieth century had a significant personal impact on Elwood's family through the loss of his parents' longtime home on Cloud Avenue. Lakeland residents who lived through urban renewal, and their descendants, experienced this transformation as a deep loss. Elwood Gross keenly observed the sacrifices that were made by Lakelanders to achieve the benefits that other communities took for granted.

The home at 5110 Pierce Avenue remains in Gross family ownership today.

The Elwood and Wilmer Gross House is significant as embodying the development of the historically African American community of Lakeland and the influence of the Gross family within the neighborhood, particularly during the contested urban renewal campaign of the latter twentieth century. The property is also significant as a representative example of a contemporary tri-level Split-Level, a popular house form of the mid-twentieth century, and an intact representation of the "Capri" model kit house sold by Swift Homes, Inc.

The Elwood and Wilmer Gross House retains sufficient physical integrity to convey its historical and architectural significance. The home remains in its original location, and while the adjacent landscape has changed, the demolition of historic buildings and construction of new homes and the Paint Branch Elementary School are reflections of this site's historic context and do not undermine its integrity of setting.

The property holds a high degree of integrity of design, workmanship, and materials: the home has had minimal alterations to the standard Swift Homes, Inc. "Capri" model kit house and is easily legible as a contemporary style tri-level Split-Level. The house retains a spatial connection to the former Gross family property in Block 2 and to the adjoining Gross family home at 8002 54th Avenue and therefore retains its integrity of feeling and association.

Historic Preservation Commission Policy #1-87, "Evaluating Integrity, Degree of Alteration, and Scarcity and Frequency," states that a property's integrity should be considered in the context of the scarcity of the resource type it represents, with a less restrictive standard of integrity applied when few or no other similar properties exist in the Inventory of Historic Resources. The Elwood and Wilmer Gross House conveys historical themes related to family and community history of

Lakeland and the African American experience of urban renewal, which are underrepresented in Prince George's County's Inventory of Historic Resources. It would also represent the first mid-century split-level kit house to be designated. Within Lakeland, only the Lakeland High School, an institutional resource, has been designated as a Historic Site.

Considering the minor changes that have occurred to the exterior materials and appearance, the subject property retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as reflection of the heritage of the African American community of Lakeland, the influence of Elwood Gross during the Lakeland Urban Renewal project, and a unique architectural form.

Staff concluded that the Elwood and Wilmer Gross House meets four of the nine historic site designation criteria of Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iii), (1)(A)(iv), (2)(A)(i), and 2(A)(v).

Staff further concluded that, in weighing both the alterations that have been made to the house and the current representation of the resource type within the Inventory of Historic Resources, the Elwood and Wilmer Gross House can be found to possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent, or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant.

Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board and District Council that the Elwood and Wilmer Gross House, Documented Property 66-000-02, and its 0.241-acre Environmental Setting (Lot 1 of Block 3, "Lakeland"), be designated a Prince George's County Historic Site as meeting the following criteria in Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iii), (1)(A)(iv), (2)(A)(i), and 2(A)(v).

Dr. Llatetra Brown Esters, District 2 Councilmember for the City of College Park, thanked the Commission and supported the staff's recommendations that the three Lakeland properties be designated as Prince George's County Historic Sites as they maintain their significance and physical integrity.

MOTION: Commissioner Norwood moved that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board and District Council that the Elwood and Wilmer Gross House, Documented Property 66-000-02, and its 0.241-acre Environmental Setting (Lot 1 of Block 3, "Lakeland"), be designated a Prince George's County Historic Site as meeting the following criteria in Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iii), (1)(A)(iv), (2)(A)(i), and 2(A)(v). Commissioner Jenkins seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote and without objection (7-0).

The HPC received two items of correspondence related to these three evaluations: two letters of support from the City of College Park District 2 Councilmembers, Dr. Llatetra Brown Esters and Susan Whitney.

Tom Gross congratulated Janet Adesina and Kacy Rohn for the large amount of research and preparation for their presentations.

E. COMMISSION STAFF ITEMS

1. HAWP Staff Sign-Offs

There were no further questions.

2. Properties of Concern

Tom Gross provided an update on the Show Cause Order for the Toaping Castle Site. Staff have received no communication from the property owner.

3. Referrals Report

There were no further questions.

4. Correspondence Report

There were no further questions.

5. New Business/Staff Updates

Ms. Rohn announced that the Joint Public Hearing for the Boswell House is currently scheduled for January 16, 2024. Chairman Thompson reminded the Commissioners of the Grants Committee Workshop in January and asked them to serve on the Committee.

MOTION: Commissioner Reff moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pruden. The motion was approved by acclamation and without objection (7-0). The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Sincerely,



Natalie Zalc
Planning Technician III
Historic Preservation Section