



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

1616 McCormick Drive, Largo, Maryland 20774 • pgplan.org/HPC • 301-952-3680 • historicpreservation@ppd.mnccppc.org

APPROVED 12/17/2024

Summary of Actions

Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission
Tuesday, November 19, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS

Commissioners Present: Chair John Peter Thompson, 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, Tyler Smith, Natalie Zalc

Guest: Name/Organization	Agenda Item
Norman Rivera, Esq.	C.1.
Pete Mellits	C.1.
Jon Marco Sanchez	C.1.
Zac Meyer	C.1.
Jeanette Silor	C.1.
Traci Scudder, Esq.	C.1.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. Ms. Rohn read introductory remarks about the meeting and procedures into the record.

Commissioners Carpenter-Rock and Jenkins had an excused absence.

B.1. APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY – October 15, 2024

MOTION: Commissioner Pruden moved to approve the October 15, 2024, meeting summary. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Reff. The motion was approved by roll call vote and without objection (4-0).

C.1. DEVELOPMENT REFERRAL, MR-2024-005, Old Crain Solar

Dr. Stabler presented. The subject property is located in the 3600 block of Old Crain Highway and comprises approximately 19 acres of the 41-acre parcel identified as Tax Map 93, Grid C-2, Parcel 8. The site lies to the east of Crain Highway (US Route 301) and along Old Crain Highway, south of Village Drive West and is characterized by mostly open land with some wooded areas within. The subject property is Zoned Residential-Agricultural (R-A) and is in the *Approved Subregion 6 Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* area.

The applicant proposed to install a 10.3-acre solar array, consisting of 4,875 panels (2.0 MW AC). The panels will be accessed by a 20-foot-wide access drive with a turnaround area for emergency vehicles, two solar equipment pad areas for the switchgear, transformers and inverters, an 8' x 20' storage shed, an electrical utility connection, and applicable stormwater management and erosion/sediment control facilities. A seven-foot security fence is proposed to be installed around the entire solar array.

The subject property is within the Woodland Historic District (79-063), determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the Maryland Historical Trust in July 1993. The district is significant in that it illustrates the evolution of large landholdings of a prominent family (the Hill family), from the large plantation (Compton Bassett), divided generation after generation, into the smaller plantations and farms of descendants. The eligibility of the district is based on its association with the Hill family, which developed the area (Criterion A), and the architectural merit of many of the houses which characterize the region (Criterion C). The district also includes two small dwellings built by freedmen immediately after the Civil War. The Hills were one of the most prominent landholding families in Prince George's County and helped to shape the county's destiny over time. Included within the district are several excellent examples of many of the major architectural styles which influenced domestic architecture in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

Virtually all this rural agricultural district was, at the end of the eighteenth century, part of the extensive landholdings of Clement Hill. Four of the important historic buildings in this district were built for members of the Hill family, one of them by prominent local carpenter John C. Wyvill. Three other important historic buildings in the district were also built by and for members of the Wyvill family. Also included in the district are two small dwellings built by freedmen immediately after the Civil War.

The district illustrates the agricultural use of the land over a period of more than 300 years. The district is bound together into a discrete and cohesive unit by important historic arteries of communication. Old Crain Highway, which runs through the district, is a Scenic and Historic Road. The district is significant for its architecture, agriculture, and transportation networks.

The subject property is adjacent to Bleak Hill, Historic Site 79-063-06, and was historically part of the Bleak Hill plantation. Bleak Hill was constructed in 1852 in the Greek Revival style and is a two-story, side-gabled frame plantation house with bracketed cornice and small kitchen wing. The interior is notable for its fine Greek Revival detail. It was built for Richard Smith Hill on his portion of the Hill family's Woodland acreage. Bleak Hill is unusual for its

irregular Georgian floor plan and significant for its size and siting. Originally part of a tract of land called Giant's Range, Richard Smith Hill renamed his portion of Woodland and called his house Bleak Hill.

The subject property is also adjacent to Bowling Heights, a County Historic Site (79-005) that is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and Gregor Hall, Historic Site 79-063-12. Bowling Heights, built in 1877, is a large, three-part, frame Victorian Gothic mansion with outstanding Eastlake and Stick style decorative details. The two-and-one-half-story, hip-roof main block is flanked by asymmetrical lower wings, one of which served as a private Catholic chapel. The grounds include several unique historic outbuildings. This house was built for John D. Bowling, Jr., and is nearly identical to Villa de Sales (Historic Site 87B-036-13) in Aquasco, built for Bowling's sister a few years later. Bowling Heights was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Also adjacent to the property is Gregor Hall, a substantial two-and-one-half-story dwelling built in 1926 for M. Hampton Magruder, a socially and politically prominent lawyer from a well-known county family. It is executed in the Colonial Revival Style with Flemish bond brickwork, three gabled dormers on both slopes of the main roof and exterior end chimneys.

Although not adjacent to the property, the proposed solar array could also impact the viewshed of the Wyvill House, Historic Site 79-063-50, and the John Henry Quander House, Historic Site 79-063-14. The Wyvill House, located at 4102 Old Crain Highway, was constructed in 1889 and is a two-and-one-half-story, gable-roof frame dwelling with a projecting central cross gable, distinguished by novelty shingles and perforated vergeboards at the gable ends. It was built by local carpenter John C. Wyvill for Catherine Hill on her portion of the Woodland acreage. It is one of several fine dwellings in the Upper Marlboro area designed by members of the Wyvill family of builders. It was later acquired by the grandson of the builder and is still owned by the Wyvill family. The John Henry Quander House was constructed in the 1870s. This vernacular one-and-a-half story house has a square plan, decorative vergeboard, and a full-width, fully enclosed porch with a shed roof. John Henry Quander had been among the large, enslaved workforce of Mordecai Plummer, whose plantation was located about one mile north of the subject property. Quander purchased the land from Henry W. Clagett. The house is a rare example of a Reconstruction-era dwelling built by a newly freed African American.

The subject property also contains one documented property, 4000 Crain Highway (79-078), a vernacular farmhouse built between 1850 and 1860 that was once part of the 304-acre Bleak Hill property and was demolished between 2009 and 2011. There may be significant archaeological resources associated with this site.

The subject site is within the 2013 *Approved Subregion 6 Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* area, which contains goals and policies related to historic preservation (pp. 161-173). Although these are not specific to the subject site, they generally encourage the preservation of farmsteads, barns, and other structures which have historical significance and define the rural heritage of the county.

The applicant proposed to install a landscape buffer in specific locations, comprised of evergreen trees, flowering trees, and shrubs along the property's frontage on Old Crain

Highway and the southern boundary of the property adjacent to Bleak Hill, Historic Site 79-006.

The subject property has a high probability of containing significant prehistoric and historic archaeological resources. Several archaeological investigations conducted in the vicinity of the subject property have identified eighteenth to twentieth century farmsteads, as well as prehistoric Late Woodland short-term camps. There is a high probability of the subject property containing significant archaeological resources.

Staff concluded that although the applicant is proposing to provide a vegetative buffer around the solar arrays, the proposal will still have a visual impact on the Bleak Hill Historic Site, Bowling Heights Historic Site, and Gregor Hall Historic Site and the National Register-eligible Woodland Historic District in general. A solar array is not compatible with the agricultural character of the district and no similar uses are present within the district. The applicant is proposing to install a landscape buffer containing flowering trees, evergreen trees, and shrubs in specific locations to buffer the solar array from the three adjacent Historic Sites. The introduction of the solar arrays in an area that is characterized by farm fields growing crops would compromise the Woodland Historic District's integrity and its potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The applicant should provide sightline studies and other exhibits as appropriate to demonstrate the extent to which the proposed solar array will be visible from the three adjacent Historic Sites and the scenic and historic road, and how that visual impact will be mitigated with landscape buffering.

There is a high probability of the subject property containing significant archaeological resources. Historic Preservation staff recommended that a Phase I archaeological survey be conducted prior to any development of the property. If significant sites are identified in the Phase I investigation, additional Phase II and Phase III archaeological investigations may be required. All archaeological investigations should be completed prior to any ground disturbance or the issuance of a grading permit for this proposal.

Historic Preservation Staff recommended to the Historic Preservation Commission approval of MRF-2024-005, Old Crain Solar, with the following conditions:

1. Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the applicant shall
 - a. conduct a Phase I archaeological survey on the subject property.
 - b. Upon receipt of the Phase I archeological report by the Planning Department, if it is determined that potentially significant archeological resources exist in the project area, prior to approval of the grading permits, the applicant shall provide a plan for:
 - c. Evaluating the resource at the Phase II level, or
 - d. Avoiding and preserving the resource in place.

- e. If a Phase II and/or Phase III archeological evaluation or mitigation is necessary, the applicant shall provide a final report detailing the Phase II and/or Phase III investigations and ensure that all artifacts are curated in a proper manner.

Staff further recommended to the Historic Preservation Commission that the following comment be forwarded to the Planning Board:

To the maximum extent feasible, landscape buffering and/or required afforestation should be located in areas of the project site that will minimize the visual impact of the proposed solar array on the adjacent Historic Sites and the Scenic and Historic Roadway.

Chairman Thompson inquired why the landscape buffer comment was not recommended as a condition. Mr. Gross explained that the comment on buffering and afforestation acknowledges uncertainty as to the outcome of the Woodland Conservation Ordinance discussion on afforestation.

Norman Rivera, Esq., counsel for the applicant, agreed that the conclusions in the staff report meet the standards of the solar energy system guidelines for the Mandatory Referral. Jon Marco Sanchez, representing the applicant, Soltage, provided an overview of the project, including the economic and environmental benefits of solar panels and warranty information. Commissioner Norwood asked if solar farms emit noise. Mr. Sanchez explained the solar panels do not make noise, but the transformers do only during the day when they're operating, at approximately the level of an air conditioner.

Traci Scudder, Esq., representing Jack Queen, owner of the adjacent Bleak Hill Historic Site, expressed her client's concern with the location of the proposed solar farm. Ms. Scudder concurred with the conclusions in the staff report regarding the potential adverse visual impacts on the nearby historic sites and the potential negative impacts to the integrity of these sites and the National Register-eligible district. She asked the HPC to consider a non-recommendation for this project to better align with the conclusions of the staff report.

Chairman Thompson stated that if the HPC recommends denial of the Mandatory Referral, they will have no future say on the project and no opportunity to recommend conditions. Commissioners discussed the structure of potential motions with legal counsel. Mr. Rivera was given the opportunity to make final comments on behalf of the applicant and had nothing further to add.

MOTION: Commissioner Pruden moved that the HPC recommend approval of MRF-2024-005, Old Crain Solar, with the following conditions:

Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the applicant shall

- a. Conduct a Phase I archaeological survey on the subject property.

- b. Upon receipt of the Phase I archaeological report by the Planning Department, if it is determined that potentially significant archaeological resources exist in the project area, prior to approval of the grading permits, the applicant shall provide a plan for:
- c. Evaluating the resource at the Phase II level, or
- d. Avoiding and preserving the resource in place.
- e. If a Phase II and/or Phase III archaeological evaluation or mitigation is necessary, the applicant shall provide a final report detailing the Phase II and/or Phase III investigations and ensure that all artifacts are curated in a proper manner.

She further moved that the HPC add the following comment to the recommendation to the Planning Board:

To the maximum extent feasible, landscape buffering and/or required afforestation should be located in areas of the project site that will minimize the visual impact of the proposed solar array on the adjacent Historic Sites and the Scenic and Historic Roadway.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Norwood. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0-1 (the Chair voted present).

D.1. HISTORIC PROPERTY GRANT PROGRAM

Daniel Tana presented. A detailed briefing was omitted, as all of the HPC members had also served on the Historic Property Grant Program Committee. On April 8, 2008, the Prince George's County Council approved CB-003-2008 (DR-2), the legislation enabling the Prince George's County Historic Property Grant Program. The program provides grants to nonprofit organizations or foundations, political subdivisions, and individuals for the purpose of acquiring, preserving, restoring, or rehabilitating historic properties in accordance with the Maryland Land Use Article, Sections 26-101—26-107. The Prince George's County Planning Board adopted the Program Guidelines on May 8, 2008; the Planning Board revised the guidelines on July 21, 2016, and again on September 16, 2021.

The program was reauthorized in the FY 2025 budget with \$440,100.00 in available funds. A sixteenth round of the program was announced in July 2024 and four virtual workshops for potential applicants were held in July and August—on Saturday, July 13 (morning); Tuesday, July 16 (afternoon); Wednesday, July 24 (morning); and Thursday, August 1 (evening). All four workshops were hosted on Microsoft Teams. In addition, a recording of one of the workshops was uploaded to the Grants page of the Planning Department's website, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's YouTube page, for individuals who could not attend any of the available workshops live. Mailings advertising the 2025 program year, with information on the workshops and application deadlines, were sent to all property owners in Historic Districts, all owners of Historic Sites and Historic Resources, and to the County's 27 municipalities. A total of 29 people registered for the workshops. Thirteen

applications were received, one application was ineligible based on the Program Guidelines, and two applications were withdrawn. The remaining 10 applications totaled \$474,999.50 in requested grant funds from eligible applications for the 2025 program year.

In accordance with the program guidelines, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Chair appointed a grant committee consisting of six HPC members and five Planning Department staff members to review applications and provide award recommendations to the HPC. The committee evaluated and scored the proposed projects using the selection criteria and the program guidelines and made award recommendations accordingly.

Part of the grant committee's work was to try to direct funds to proposed work that most exemplifies the purpose of the program in accordance with the adopted program guidelines. Particular attention was given to the guidance that identifies projects, or components of projects, as ineligible when they provide little to no public benefit by focusing mainly on interior finishes and not on the preservation of the structure or building envelope. Recommended award amounts were reduced as necessary, based on the specifics of the proposed work (e.g. removing work items that would not be eligible or approvable via the Historic Area Work Permit process from the budget), resulting in a total of \$394,134.99 in recommended funding. Attachment 2 ("Compiled FY 2025 Applications") includes copies of each grant application that was considered, in its final form.

Staff requested that the HPC recommend to the Planning Board that Historic Property Grant Program awards be approved based on the applications received and the Grant Committee's recommendations. The HPC's recommendations will be presented to the Planning Board for review and award selection at a meeting in December 2024.

MOTION: Commissioner Pruden moved that the HPC recommend to the Planning Board that the Historic Property Grant program awards totaling \$394,134.99 be approved based on the applications received and the Grant Committee's recommendations. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Norwood. The motion was approved by roll call vote and without objection (4-0).

E.1. HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT, 2024-008, Mackall House

Ms. Rohn presented. Julia B. Claypool, owner of Benjamin Mackall House and Cemetery, Historic Site 86A-022, at 12518 Plantation Drive, Brandywine, applied for a tax credit for work totaling \$15,926.00. The work was approved by HAWP 2024-029 and consisted of pre-painting preparation, including repair and in-kind replacement of damaged trim pieces, and repainting of all areas of the exterior siding and trim boards in a color matching the circa-1900 paint layer. The work was completed in September 2024 (Fiscal Year 2025).

The subject application included all required photographs and documentation. Staff determined all expenses to be eligible.

Based on the documentation of the work supplied by the applicant and the Historic Preservation Commission's adopted tax credit policies and procedures, staff recommended the

approval of a historic preservation tax credit in the amount of **\$3,981.50**. This credit would apply for FY 2026, the tax year following the year in which the work was completed. Staff recommended that the application be granted as meeting Standards 1, 2, and 6 of the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*, which state:

- (1) A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- (2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- (6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

Further, the application meets provisions 1, 2, and 3 of Subtitle 29-111(b), which state:

- (1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource.
- (2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural, or cultural features of the historic resource and is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Subtitle.
- (3) The proposal will enhance or aid in the protection, preservation, and public or private utilization of the historic resource in a manner compatible with its historical, archeological, architectural, or cultural value.

There were no questions from the commissioners.

MOTION: Commissioner Reff moved to approve Preservation Tax Credit 2024-008, Mackall House & Cemetery, in the amount of \$3,981.50 as meeting Standards 1, 2, and 6 of the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* and provisions 1, 2, and 3 of Subtitle 29-111(b). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pruden. The motion was approved by roll call vote and without objection (5-0).

F. UPDATE FROM DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

Ms. Rohn presented the Department of Parks and Recreation Quarterly Reports and provided a brief update regarding various properties undergoing repairs.

G. COMMISSION STAFF ITEMS

1. HAWP Staff Sign-Offs

There were no further questions.

2. Properties of Concern

Commissioner Reff inquired about the status of Admirathoria. Ms. Rohn stated staff have continued their attempt to contact DPIE regarding the outstanding work items but they have been unresponsive. Staff will attempt to reach an alternate contact in DPIE. Chairman Thompson noted his intention for the Commission to review all Properties of Concern at a future meeting.

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 list of 2025 HPC meeting dates is complete and will be distributed soon.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment received.

MOTION: Commissioner Pruden moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Norwood. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Sincerely,

Natalie Zalc

Natalie Zalc
Planning Technician III
Historic Preservation Section