

12/5 James Pearté Farm Prelim Consult.  
1700 Camus Rd. Dickerson

BRUCE HUTCHINSON, A.I.A.      hutchcia@aol.com

HUTCHINSON + ASSOCIATES, L.L.C.  
Architect

11820 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852  
Phone: 301-770-9680    Fax: 301-770-9163

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has an  
agreement

1 MS. FOTHERGILL: There is. This is a second  
2 preliminary consultation for master plan site 12-5, the  
3 James Perry Farm, at 17700 Comus Road in Dickerson. The  
4 applicants came in April 2007, had a first preliminary  
5 consultation. And the transcript is in your staff report.  
6 And they are now returning for a second time.

7 They are proposing a two-story addition at the  
8 right side of the house. The house is circa 1857, Greek  
9 Revival house that has had additions built in the twenties  
10 and the sixties. And they are now proposing a right side  
11 addition that would connect where the 1920's addition and  
12 part of the 1960's section of the house are.

13 And the proposed massing is five bays and  
14 approximately the same height as the house. And it's L-  
15 shaped and it would extend behind the side wing and create  
16 sort of an internal courtyard area. The addition will have  
17 stone and wood siding and a metal roof.

18 The applicants placed this wing, this addition,  
19 in this location to maximize the mountain views of  
20 Sugarloaf Mountain, but also observe the large trees that  
21 are in the rear right side of the house. And Maryland  
22 Environmental Trust built an easement on this property, so  
23 preservation of trees is critical.

24 They are also proposing, in addition to the side  
25 addition, some changes to that rear 1960's section of the  
26 house. It will have essentially the same footprint, but

1 they are proposing some changes and also adding onto that  
2 section of the house a new three-car garage. And that  
3 garage would extend around and create sort of a wall for a  
4 pool, but closing up the left side of the house.

5           There are important outbuildings on the property,  
6 and they are proposing to restore those outbuildings and  
7 perhaps use one of them as part of the pool area for a pool  
8 house. And they, you will recall in the previous document,  
9 there were numerous letters of support from neighbors. And  
10 they are not included in this packet, but they can be  
11 provided if you would like them.

12           And there are photos and proposed plans in your  
13 packet. And I will show you slides of the house so you can  
14 familiarize yourself with it.

15           So, this is an aerial view of the house and of  
16 the farm. And it is a very large farm, and only, I  
17 believe, 6.7 acres are part of the environmental study.  
18 This is the front of the historic massing. And on the  
19 right side is where they are proposing the side addition,  
20 approximately where that side wing is, but a little further  
21 forward towards the original massing.

22           And as you'll see, this house has this 1960's  
23 section as you go around. And so it has had these major  
24 additions at the rear of the house. This is going around.  
25 These are the trees that they are preserving, in the view.  
26 And this is around back. And this is, again, the later

1 addition. And this is looking towards the historic barn  
2 and the outbuildings that they are proposing to restore if  
3 they go forward with this project.

4 This is the side of the house where they are  
5 proposing that three-car garage that would also be part of  
6 the pool. And the pool would be on this side of the house,  
7 tucked back behind the historic section of the house, and  
8 away from the entrance to the property.

9 And, you know, the applicants are here, and want  
10 to talk to you about this. This obviously is a lot of  
11 changes proposed for a master plan site. At the original  
12 preliminary consultation, the discussion, the proposed  
13 addition was taller and larger than it is now, and the  
14 Commission -- the original plans are in here. You can see  
15 them in circle 64. And the Commission did not support, you  
16 know, such an overpowering addition to this house.

17 And so now they have reduced the height, and they  
18 have made it an L-shape, so it is not so long across. And  
19 they, they want to hear from you if this is something that  
20 you can support. You know, staff has had to point out the  
21 pros and the cons in the staff report.

22 Restoring the outbuildings and restoring the  
23 house and the reversibility of this addition, as it is  
24 setback from the historic massing. But it is a lot to add  
25 to the site. So do you have any questions for me?  
26 Otherwise, the applicants and their architect are here.

1 MR. FULLER: Are there any questions for staff?  
2 I have one. Our circle 19, can you just sort of walk  
3 through which parts of what we're looking at are either  
4 existing and/or existing that are going to be sort of be  
5 added on top of?

6 MS. FOTHERGILL: Yes. Okay. Yes. This is --  
7 okay. If you hold it horizontally, the most forward  
8 projection, that small massing, is the historic massing,  
9 with the two chimneys on the left side. And that rear  
10 piece is existing, going back. But this is what they are  
11 proposing, this addition coming off the side is the  
12 proposed addition. And then they are also proposing --  
13 essentially, this is here. It is being reconfigured a  
14 little.

15 But essentially, this rear 1960's addition is  
16 here. They are proposing to put an attached garage back  
17 here. So this is new, and this, this is really the key  
18 piece, and then the pool.

19 MR. FULLER: Thank you.

20 MS. ALDERSON: Can I just get a clarification on  
21 that. So if we are reading, if I am reading this  
22 correctly, the actual connection is completely behind the  
23 original house, correct?

24 MS. FOTHERGILL: These --

25 MS. ALDERSON: But from there it comes forward a  
26 little bit, so that the plane of the side portion, as you

1 see it from the front, is within the plane of where the  
2 original house is. But the connection point is behind the  
3 original house. Is that right?

4 MS. FOTHERGILL: Right. It connects in a part of  
5 the house that's 1920's, and a part that's 1960's. But  
6 yes, that's essentially it.

7 MS. ALDERSON: Thanks.

8 MR. FULLER: Thank you. Would the applicant like  
9 to come forward, please? Welcome, please. If we could get  
10 your names for the record, and would you like to make a  
11 presentation, ask questions, please.

12 MR. PLEASANTS: I'm Don Pleasants. This is my  
13 wife Claudia, and Bruce Hutchinson, our architect. We  
14 appreciate you having us again to look at our plans. Bruce  
15 has done a lot of work on this. It's probably better for  
16 him to explain what we are trying to do here, and answer  
17 any questions you've got, and hopefully be able to satisfy  
18 your needs and our needs.

19 MR. FULLER: Great. Do you want to move the  
20 mike?

21 MR. HUTCHINSON: Can you hear me?

22 MS. FOTHERGILL: Push your mike closer -- yes.  
23 Yes. Thank you.

24 MR. HUTCHINSON: Just to clarify a little bit  
25 about the last question. This plan kind of gives you a 3-D  
26 overall. This is the original house, but this basic

1 footprint that goes to the rear is the sixties addition  
2 that we will reconfigure slightly. But in essence, the  
3 existing house, this is the historic part. It comes back  
4 to this point. This is the garage area that we're adding  
5 to the existing mass. And this is the main addition to the  
6 right side.

7 MS. FOTHERGILL: Which part is the 1920's  
8 addition?

9 MR. HUTCHINSON: This section going to the rear  
10 that the new plan is connecting. We made the addition a  
11 story and a half in profile, to try to bring the massing  
12 down, also connected it to the rear of the historic  
13 structure. And we tried to keep this element in the  
14 background so it will appear lower even as it is equal, but  
15 it will look lower.

16 MR. FULLER: Is there a presentation you want to  
17 make, or do you want people to start asking you questions?

18 MR. HUTCHINSON: Yes, we're open.

19 MS. ALDERSON: The new -- the rendering showing  
20 the front elevation, on the left it shows protruding, what  
21 I'm assuming is maybe the garage?

22 MR. HUTCHINSON: Yes.

23 MS. ALDERSON: It's quite a bit back. But in  
24 your perspective, the garage seems to be more tucked behind  
25 the building. If you could just explain that to us.

26 MR. HUTCHINSON: Well, if you would put this line

1 and came straight back, you would see approximately the  
2 amount of the garage that shows.

3 MS. ALDERSON: But that's a good 200 feet back or  
4 a ways.

5 MR. HUTCHINSON: Well, not 200.

6 MS. ALDERSON: About 100 feet back, maybe.

7 MR. HUTCHINSON: Yes. About 100.

8 MR. PLEASANTS: You actually will not be able to  
9 see the garage as you are approaching the house, unless you  
10 go all the way to the left side of the house and look  
11 around that side.

12 MS. ALDERSON: And just one more question.  
13 Because probably our main issue is what you see from the  
14 front, have you explored ways to both keep the mass down  
15 and pull it back so the oldest building will be most  
16 prominent. In looking at your programming, do you feel  
17 that the connection height and then the frontward portion,  
18 is that back as far as it can go?

19 Is it, you know, was it conceivable, or did you  
20 explore -- I like the connection point, and the first  
21 question in my mind was, would it be possible to actually  
22 pull that side mass further back, you know, about on line  
23 with where the connector is, so that it's clearly a  
24 separate building as you see it, you know, walking to the  
25 house?

26 MR. PLEASANTS: The real difficulty with that is



1 that we are getting into the large trees if we take it back  
2 any further. And I don't know whether you have a site plan  
3 here that shows the location of the trees, but we are --  
4 there are fairly large trees there, and we are within about  
5 30 feet of those trees, to the back of this attachment now.

6 MS. ALDERSON: Is it possible to get the slide  
7 for that again?

8 MR. FULLER: Is it this one at circle 14? Circle  
9 14, I think, shows the trees fairly accurately.

10 MS. ALDERSON: And actually the aerial would show  
11 that, too.

12 MR. HUTCHINSON: But the new wing connects to the  
13 old house at the rear most portion of the two-story wing of  
14 the second floor. We wanted to connect the second floor  
15 because the bedrooms that are in both structures will be  
16 connected.

17 MS. ALDERSON: Sure. Okay, but the main reason  
18 that the side, the larger mass needs to be where it is, was  
19 because that was as far back as it could go without  
20 affecting the mature trees?

21 MR. HUTCHINSON: Yes.

22 MS. ALDERSON: Thanks.

23 MS. MILES: I have a question. The way that this  
24 is rendered, you're showing what looks like the front door  
25 of the house has moved to the wing. I'm already concerned  
26 that the house, the original house is so, now, tiny,

1 relative to all these generations of additions. Would you  
2 consider trying to retain the front entrance in the  
3 original house so that it would be looked at as the main  
4 building?

5 MR. HUTCHINSON: The rooms in that wing are so  
6 small that it didn't really work well to have the entrance  
7 into that side.

8 MS. MILES: Is it not there now? You said moved  
9 to that side.

10 MR. HUTCHINSON: Well, I mean, we're not touching  
11 the existing. The entrance will still appear to be there.  
12 Our new main entrance has dropped down under a one-story  
13 porch and recessed underneath to diminish the impact.

14 MS. MILES: But there isn't any hardscaping to  
15 the front door anymore, based on this rendering. The front  
16 door is now off of the circular driveway on the left.  
17 Right?

18 MR. HUTCHINSON: Yes.

19 MR. PLEASANTS: The front, the front door  
20 actually doesn't function as a front door. The people that  
21 are living in the house currently, and everyone that, to my  
22 knowledge, that's lived in there for the last probably  
23 seven or eight years since we've had the property, used the  
24 garage as their entrance.

25 MS. MILES: Well, but --

26 MR. PLEASANTS: But no one, no one, essentially,

1 comes to the front door there, because it's really not very  
2 functional.

3 MS. MILES: Okay.

4 MR. BURSTYN: I have a procedural question.

5 Since the applicant is also going to restore the  
6 outbuildings, is this part of this application, or will  
7 that be a separate application.

8 MS. FOTHERGILL: This is not an application at  
9 this point. It's just a preliminary, so ultimately that  
10 will be part of their application.

11 MR. BURSTYN: Right.

12 MS. FOTHERGILL: Yes.

13 MR. FULLER: What we heard last time was that the  
14 outbuildings would be restored as part of this effort, and  
15 assuming that that still is the general intent, and I'm  
16 assuming that this is simply because the house was the real  
17 issue, that's what's on the drawings in front of us right  
18 now?

19 MR. PLEASANTS: That's correct. As far as the  
20 restoration to the outbuildings, all I really intend to do  
21 is to restore them as close as I can to their original  
22 condition. I would like to be able to use the one building  
23 as a bath house. And it already has a window in the back  
24 of it. It's a fairly large window that was used for a  
25 greenhouse. And I don't think it would require hardly any  
26 exterior renovation other than restoration and trying to

1 restore the logs.

2           The logs in these buildings are very  
3 deteriorated. The prior owners filled the cracks in the  
4 logs, or the separation between the logs rather than with  
5 the chinking, they used concrete and it's, of course, made  
6 the deterioration.

7           MR. FULLER: Do we have some general questions?  
8 Do you want to go down the line and everybody give their  
9 comments on the application as they see it?

10           MR. BURSTYN: No comment.

11           MS. ALDERSON: I don't really have much to add  
12 either. I think it's a great improvement, having brought  
13 the mass in. And my main hope was just to bring it back as  
14 far as possible. I wouldn't want to do that at the  
15 sacrifice of the trees. It is a lot of, a lot of mass.  
16 And I don't know how much more could be done to keep the  
17 original house prominent without sacrificing what meets  
18 your minimum level of something that's worth reinvestment.

19           We certainly want to encourage the outbuildings  
20 to be preserved, and we've seen outbuildings that don't  
21 last when they're not. So I'm less concerned about the  
22 pool. I think that's tucked behind. The three-car garage,  
23 to me, also is not a significant issue on a property this  
24 large where it's tucked behind, and the preservation of the  
25 trees matters.

26           The only thing I could think of is, is to think

1 about the circular driveway, because I share the concern  
2 about at least what is visually the entrance. And I think  
3 the fact that you left the very simple doorway alone is  
4 good. And in some ways, there are going to be paving  
5 alterations, having them not be there makes sense. But on  
6 the other hand it does, the circular driveway, especially  
7 if there are landscaping features, is going to tend to give  
8 prominence to the other.

9           So my thought on that is to think about what  
10 landscaping or what treatment would be very subdued, which  
11 might be even brownstone, you know, something that blends  
12 in and looks earthen. And maybe minimal landscaping, or  
13 something that doesn't necessarily make the new building  
14 the prominent, and the old building less important.

15           MR. FULLER: Do you think that if the detail type  
16 things that you're talking about, are you saying that in  
17 your mind this could be something that could be an  
18 approvable application?

19           MS. ALDERSON: Well, I'm interested in also  
20 hearing what the other Commissioners have to say.  
21 Sometimes we do begin to think more as a group as we toss  
22 thoughts out. But I think it's a borderline case, because  
23 we are interested in reinvestment of the property, and  
24 we've taken great pains to design sympathetically, to use  
25 very sympathetic materials to go with a high quality that  
26 doesn't diminish the building.

1           I think if the other Commissioners are feeling  
2 like this is a compromise that's acceptable, I would  
3 certainly be inclined to support that.

4           MR. FLEMING: No comment.

5           MR. ROTENSTEIN: I agree with Commissioner  
6 Alderson that this is an admirable effort that you're  
7 making to restore the outbuildings and to be sympathetic to  
8 the historic original massing of the house.

9           But I'm disturbed by the fact that this addition  
10 on the right side is significantly larger than the original  
11 massing of the house, and it literally swallows up,  
12 visually, the original block of the historic house. I  
13 would  
14 have a lot of problems approving a historic area work  
15 permit that has that large right addition, as well as the  
16 oval drive in front of it.

17           I would encourage you to explore, as much as  
18 possible, going to the rear, or working off of the existing  
19 rear addition as much as possible, to minimize the visual  
20 impact to the original block of the house. I don't have  
21 any real issues with the three-car garage or the pool. The  
22 only thing I have an issue with is that large addition to  
23 the right side. It's visually prominent in the front.

24           MS. ANAHTAR: I guess I don't know what I think,  
25 but what I see is that a lot of pieces, but I don't think  
26 they are put together yet. I mean, I see a lot of pieces,

1 but I don't see that as unified as a bigger house that  
2 makes better sense.

3 I see a difference, a style problem, first of  
4 all. The original house has one style. Additions 'speak  
5 another language. Window openings, just, you know, I don't  
6 know. I mean, I like how the mass is broken into smaller  
7 pieces. That I like about it. And how the roof works, I  
8 mean, this rendering. But elevations, when I look at the  
9 facades, I don't see the same language throughout the  
10 building. That's what I have a problem with.

11 MS. MILES: I wasn't here when you were here last  
12 time, because I'm fairly new to the Commission. I would  
13 agree that I don't have any complaints about the pool or  
14 the garage, but when I look through this material and read  
15 the transcript of the last meeting, the original house, I  
16 think you made a telling remark when you called it a wing.  
17 It becomes a wing in this. There is so much addition, you  
18 already have several additions that I would rather see you  
19 build off of.

20 I'm somewhere, I guess, between Commissioner  
21 Alderson and Commissioner Rotenstein. I think that I could  
22 see the wing on the right if it were substantially smaller.  
23 You wouldn't have to push it back if you made it smaller,  
24 and interfere with the trees.

25 I'm concerned that the original house has  
26 essentially disappeared into a series of very different

1 looking, as you said, very different looking pieces. And  
2 they don't speak to me as a whole. I agree with that as  
3 well.

4 And I'm very concerned that the circular big  
5 driveway and you walk up to a new house, and there will be  
6 a quaint little addition in the back which happens to be  
7 the old one. And I don't think that will be like there is  
8 an original historic house. It will be like a very large,  
9 very new house with a quaint little wing.

10 MR. FULLER: I guess, first of all, we want to  
11 thank you guys for coming back in and continuing to work  
12 with this property, because I know the last time when you  
13 left we sort of had the indications that you might just let  
14 this disappear for a while. So I think I really do  
15 appreciate the fact that you continued to work on the  
16 property and see what could be done.

17 My personal thoughts are that definitely the  
18 scaling back of the addition, and pushing it further to the  
19 rear, I think, helped the project. I concur with all the  
20 comments that have been made about the pool and the garage.  
21 Those really don't deal with things, or don't really impact  
22 what's going on here.

23 Anne made a comment that we really haven't talked  
24 much about the fact that basically because of the way this  
25 addition is being proposed, essentially it's a completely  
26 reversible type of an addition. Nothing that is being done



1 here is really going to damage the originally historic  
2 house. The way this set up it is tying in sort right at  
3 the  
4 border between the twenties and the sixties addition.

5 I don't disagree with some of the earlier  
6 comments that were made about whether it would be possible  
7 to push it back ever so slightly to try to keep it  
8 completely in the sixties additions.

9 I do concur the fact that we have to be careful  
10 not to completely diminish the older house entrance and the  
11 letting it be just completely an outbuilding. At the same  
12 time, it would be -- I would hate to see you choose to make  
13 the compromise to say, okay, I'm going to let that be the  
14 outbuilding, and I'm going to blow out the inside of the  
15 house.

16 Because even though we don't have purview over  
17 what happens inside, I think, you know, an architectural  
18 solution would be to be a big grand entrance hall out of  
19 that house, which could be something. I think that would  
20 be the wrong solution. I think that maintaining the  
21 structure there, even though that's not part of what we  
22 officially look at, I think trying to maintain that is  
23 good.

24 So, how do we try to give you some advice? We've  
25 had several people not respond. I think I've heard fairly  
26 clearly that the idea of a garage and a pool, that there is

1 no concern for the things like that.

2 I think that there has definitely been an across  
3 the board concern as it relates to, this is a very large  
4 addition on a house that has large additions to begin with.  
5 It is a compromise solution that, I think, we're sort of  
6 trading the value of making sure that the rest of the  
7 property is continuing to be utilized and restored and  
8 functional, rather than simply sitting out in a field and  
9 being used as a tenant house.

10 I think that from my perspective, I'd prefer to  
11 see somebody treat this as the primary house, and do what  
12 they can to restore the features around it. So I guess I'd  
13 way, bend a little bit further towards the compromise side.

14 I don't know if there are better ways that we  
15 could try to define for you. How much is too much? Or how  
16 far forward is too forward? Or how to give some emphasis  
17 back to the old house. I think you've heard sort of some  
18 grappling on those three issues. But I think those are  
19 sort of the three issues that you're hearing from us, that  
20 would be the ones that would allow us to push this over the  
21 edge.

22 I guess I'll turn it back over to you. Do you  
23 think you're hearing enough from what we've said and talked  
24 about, or do you want me to try to poll the commission  
25 again and try to get some further clarity?

26 MS. ALDERSON: Well, I have just one other

1 question, just thinking about, you know, other ways to  
2 slice the cake. I know everybody at the table would rather  
3 see a side addition be behind the mass of the house, if  
4 possible. Is it conceivable that the location of the, what  
5 we'll call the wing to the right of the house, to be  
6 flipped so that it's on the left side, behind and beside  
7 the house, occupying a portion of where you had planned to  
8 put the pool, and then shift the pool somewhat?

9 I'm not, I'm not being able, in my mind, to  
10 picture what the topography is there, whether you have that  
11 opportunity. But it's a thought.

12 MR. PLEASANTS: I don't think the topography  
13 makes a whole lot of difference which side we would build  
14 on. Certainly, the layout of the house doesn't function  
15 nearly as well if it goes from -- you already have the wing  
16 that's on the right side of the house now. And trying to  
17 make that attachment to the opposite side becomes very  
18 difficult. We've already actually looked at that approach.  
19 It just becomes very difficult to make the house function  
20 with the living quarters at that point.

21 The only comment that I've really heard that  
22 might, and again I'm just talking off the cuff here. We  
23 really haven't, and we will go back and discuss all of  
24 these concerns that you have. Is the possibility of doing  
25 what Mr. Fuller said, and that's something I really never  
26 had thought about, was making that like a grand hall as far

1 as an entrance, and coming in that part as an entrance, and  
2 pushing the house out behind it.

3 We've looked at trying to figure out how to make  
4 that function as an entrance, but it just doesn't, it  
5 doesn't work. Because if you go into it, and you enter  
6 pretty much in the center, and you wind up really in  
7 another addition that needs to be retained, which is the  
8 1920's addition. And you're on a porch, and you go down  
9 the center hall. And just, it really doesn't function well  
10 like that.

11 If we could take off the 1920's addition and work  
12 with just this piece, then we might could do quite a bit  
13 more with this property. But having to retain the 1920's  
14 addition plus this 18 whatever it is addition, we've looked  
15 at all kinds of different layouts to try to figure out how  
16 to make this house function as far as actual living in the  
17 house.

18 MR. FULLER: Correct me if I'm wrong, most of the  
19 left side of the 1920's addition has really been added to  
20 in the sixties. Would that be glass wall?

21 MR. PLEASANTS: A lot of that was added. I'm not  
22 sure exactly when that glass wall was added, but I would  
23 expect that that was the same time frame as the 1960's  
24 addition was put on.

25 MR. FULLER: I guess all I was getting to was to  
26 the extent that Commissioner Alderson had suggested sort of

1 letting the addition come off of that side, at least  
2 personally I don't think there is any real loss in the  
3 historic fabric seeing that glass wall section be  
4 reconfigured. So from my perspective, making a connection  
5 off that side, or attaching to that part of the addition is  
6 to me not much different than the 1960's part of the house.

7 MS. ALDERSON: I would agree. I think when we  
8 set priorities, there's just no question the mid-19th  
9 century section is, that is what's most important. I would  
10 rather see the 1920's section compromised if that would  
11 permit the 19th, mid-19th century section to remain strong.  
12 I mean, I think it is listed because of the Greek Revival  
13 house, not because of the 1920's addition. And that's  
14 contributing. But we'd all rather see some change there if  
15 it were to better preserve the original.

16 MR. FULLER: Do you have a comment, Bruce?

17 MR. HUTCHINSON: The only big drawback in looking  
18 at this, you're going to lose your views of Sugarloaf  
19 Mountain if you put it on the other side of the house. And  
20 the house is between here.

21 MS. ALDERSON: The mountain is -- this might help  
22 to give us some orientation there, because we don't have  
23 the bigger context.

24 MR. BURSTYN: I was just wondering, do we have  
25 any historic -- well, or were you --

26 MS. ALDERSON: It's just, he was just going to

1 answer the question.

2 MR. BURSTYN: I'm sorry. Go ahead.

3 MS. ALDERSON: Where the mountain is?

4 MR. PLEASANTS: The mountain is on the side where  
5 the new large addition was going.

6 MS. ALDERSON: On the right side as you face the  
7 house?

8 MR. PLEASANTS: Yes.

9 MS. ALDERSON: Not behind it. Thank you.

10 MR. PLEASANTS: That's correct.

11 MR. BURSTYN: When the site was placed on the  
12 master plan, do we have information about that discussion,  
13 to talk about what elements were considered important when  
14 it was placed on there? Because, I mean, we are talking  
15 about pieces of historic periods, but also, I think part of  
16 why it's on the master plan is it also provides a history,  
17 as well as architectural setting. And that's, of course,  
18 described, excerpted from "Places in the Past". But I  
19 thought maybe the master plan, if you had the original  
20 workings or application --

21 MS. FOTHERGILL: We did talk about this a little  
22 bit in the last hearing also, the idea that the period of  
23 significance did include that 1920's section of the  
24 original family. And that would be a contributing section,  
25 whereas the later sections would not, were not  
26 contributing.

1 MS. MILES: I guess I'd like to just follow up on  
2 the issue about the front door. I am not suggesting that  
3 it has to actually be used as a front door. It's the way  
4 that it appears. The way that you've configured this is a  
5 very large circular driveway, to claim that that is the  
6 entrance. There is no hardscaping to the original front  
7 door anymore.

8 With landscaping and hardscaping you can make it  
9 appear to be. And you can use it any way you like. I'm  
10 not trying to say you have to go through this door or that  
11 door. But I also think what Chairman Fuller was saying  
12 was, please don't blow out the inside of the house and  
13 create a, you know, three-story gallery in the middle.

14 But as long as you retain the appearance of a  
15 front door, you know, with hardscaping and with landscaping  
16 and with, you know, appropriate -- it can read  
17 appropriately without having to be used that way.

18 The second suggestion I would make is, if the new  
19 piece is really big, and maybe if it was smaller, then, you  
20 know, that would set it back a little, or just tuck it in a  
21 little, it wouldn't read as that big of an element. This  
22 isn't a little house now. I realize that you need more,  
23 and I'm not suggesting you shouldn't have more. But I  
24 think that having that large of an addition on that side is  
25 the issue. If it were smaller, it would be easier for me  
26 to swallow.

MR. FULLER: I think the only thing I'd follow on that is that, you know, one of the things that I think hurts in the way the current house is configured and what happens is, you end up with an awful lot of circulation spaces, as you said, from one space to the next.

For that reason, if there were ways of, I'll say, compressing the addition, whether that be by trying to work it into the sixties side of the twenties addition, or doing things like that, it would allow it to flow more like, I'll say, a more traditional house where rooms flow from room to room, rather than always having gallery space. Maybe you can do something that will help, not ending up with excessive amounts of density.

I'm not saying that I can't see an addition that's approvable on the right side, but whatever can be done to minimize the impact, as I said, I think we'll continue to hear that. But I do think this is dramatically better than what we were looking at a couple of months ago.

Can we offer any more comments, or do you think you have enough?

MR. FLEMING: The one question I've got before the Commissioners is a minor clarification. We talked about the size of the increase that they've talked about adding. Is the size over the limit of regulations with HPC?

MR. FULLER: There's really no, there's no limit.



MS. ALDERSON: This is a large property. It's a large property.

MR. FULLER: I appreciate you coming down here to see us. I would recommend one more HAWP before we go towards a real -- I'm sorry, one more consultation before you go towards a HAWP. I think there's a lot of detailing issues.

MR. PLEASANTS: Well, there is, and I guess I'm still faced with the same dilemma I was when I left here the last time. So I really need to, we need to talk and make a decision on which way we are going to go here.

MR. FULLER: I do think we are closer. But thank you.

MS. MILES: Can I ask a request? If you are going to come back, I think the description of what is new, what is twenties, what is sixties, what is original, it would be very helpful to see that on all the elevations, and from your sort of aerial perspective. And that would help me to understand better, you know, what we are dealing with. Thank you.

MR. PLEASANTS: Okay. Great. Thanks.

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**

<b>Address:</b>	17700 Comus Road, Dickerson	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	10/10/2007
<b>Resource:</b>	<i>Master Plan</i> Site #12/5 <b>James Pearré Farm</b>	<b>Report Date:</b>	10/3/2007
<b>Applicant:</b>	William and Claudia Pleasants (Bill Hutchinson, Architect)	<b>Public Notice:</b>	9/26/2007
<b>Review:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Preliminary Consultation	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	Partial
<b>Case Number:</b>	N/A	<b>Staff:</b>	Anne Fothergill
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Addition and alterations to house and installation of pool		

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission provide feedback on the applicants' submission and then the applicants respond to that direction.

**BACKGROUND**

The applicants came to the HPC for a Preliminary Consultation on April 11, 2007. The transcript can be found in Circles 20-41.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Individually Designated *Master Plan* Site #12/5  
**STYLE:** Greek Revival  
**DATE:** c. 1857-60

*Excerpt from Places in the Past:*

Situated in the shadow of Sugarloaf Mountain, the James Pearré Farm has been operated for close to a century by the Pearré family, substantial farmers and prominent citizens of early upper Montgomery County. James Pearré is thought to have built the house soon after he acquired the property in 1857 from his father. The center passage frame house has rare double external chimneys on one gable end that have stone bases and brick stacks. The front facade features a Greek Revival influenced doorway with transom and sidelights, and extra long windows on the first level. A 1914 ad described the 223-acre farmstead "improved by a large spacious dwelling house, containing 12 rooms, large halls, cellar and fine porches." By this era the "mansion house" was supplied with "pure spring water" by means of "a hydraulic ram." A fine, early bank barn (45' x 70'), with stone foundation and closed forebay, has round-arched louvered windows and three wooden cupolas. The farmstead includes an outstanding collection of log outbuildings, with a double corn house with steeply pitched roof; smokehouse; dairy; and small barn.

At the time of designation on the *Master Plan*, the environmental setting for this farm was reduced to 6.7 acres around the house so as to not include non-historic buildings for farming. Before the property was listed on the *Master Plan*, there were a number of additions to this house including sections built in the

1920s and the 1960s. The previous owner granted a conservation easement over the property to the Maryland Environmental Trust.

### PROPOSAL

The applicants propose to construct a two-story addition at the right side of the house. The addition will be built behind the original massing. It will connect at the right side where the 1920s addition and part of the 1960s section of the house are. There is a connector piece that is lower in height and the proposed main massing is five bays and approximately the same height as the house. The addition is L-shaped and extends behind the side wing creating a side courtyard area. The addition will have stone and wood siding and a metal roof.

The applicants have strategically placed the new wing in this right side location to maximize the mountain views while preserving the large trees at the rear right side of the house. Maryland Environmental Trust holds an easement on this property.

They also propose a new garage attached to the existing rear 1960s section of the house and they propose to build a pool at the left side of the house. They propose to restore the historic outbuildings on the property and perhaps use the log smokehouse as the pool house. The applicants propose some changes to the existing 1960s section of the house but it has the same general footprint. The pool is proposed for the left side yard in between the new 3-car garage and the log smokehouse with the garage wall providing screening and the outbuilding being rehabilitated and used as a pool house.

A proposed site plan and existing and proposed elevations are on pages 14-19. Photos of the house and farm are on pages 42-63. Numerous letters of support for this project from neighbors were included in the previous staff report and can be provided again if desired.

The transcript from the April 11, 2007 hearing is in Circles 20-41 and the original plans are in Circles 64+65.

### APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing alterations to a *Master Plan* site two documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents are *Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A)* and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

#### *Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A*

A HAWP permit should be issued if the Commission finds that:

1. The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of a historic site or historic resource within a historic district.
2. The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical archaeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which a historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter.

In the case of an application for work on a historic resource located within a historic district, the Commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for structures of little historical or design

significance or for plans involving new construction, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district.

***Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:***

Standard #2 The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Standard #9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Standard #10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environments would be unimpaired.

**STAFF DISCUSSION**

This is a very important *Master Plan* site and any proposed changes will receive the highest level of scrutiny from staff and the Commission. Unfortunately the original house has been substantially altered over time with sizeable rear additions, and staff is concerned about allowing further changes that could further reduce its integrity. Future compatible additions are possible, especially since there are later additions at the back of the house that could be removed and more sympathetic additions could be built at the rear.

At the previous Preliminary Consultation, overall the Commission was not supportive of a proposal for such a large and tall addition to a historic house. At that time, the applicants did not have an architect and the Commission was troubled by the plans and had some difficulty understanding them.

This is a very challenging project to review since the proposed alterations are much more extensive than the Commission and staff would generally support. However, this seems to be a possible preservation compromise since the owners are proposing to restore the historic house and outbuildings which would be critical for the long-term preservation and viability of these deteriorating and neglected buildings. The advantages of the applicants' proposal is that they would do the restoration work and allow this property to be used and enjoyed in the future. The addition is sited behind the historic massing, which will help to differentiate it and perhaps help it appear smaller since it is set back. Since the addition is connected behind the historic house it will only touch the 1920s and 1960s sections of the house, not the 19<sup>th</sup> century massing and theoretically it could be removed in the future and the original house would remain intact.

The applicants have responded to one of the largest concerns that the Commission had which was the height of the new addition was taller than the historic house. The addition is now approximately the same height as the historic house and the connector piece between the two is lower in height.

It should be noted that this house already has a very large and incompatible 1960s addition. The applicants are proposing to alter that 1960s addition but the footprint would essentially remain the same and it will stay lower in height and at the rear of the historic house.

While the HPC generally would not support a 3-car attached garage, in this case it is attached to the 1960s section of the house and set back from the historic house. The HPC has approved pools at *Master Plan*

sites and if the Commission supports a pool here staff would recommend minimal pool decking and as naturalistic a setting as possible.

Staff's main concern about this proposal is the potential adverse impact of the additions and alterations to a *Master Plan* site –changes that will be very visible and could detract from the historic house. There are major issues of scale and massing with such a large addition extending off a relatively small historic house.

Staff knows that the applicants have good intentions for this property as they love the farm and want to make this their home for many years. They also want to restore the long-neglected but very significant outbuildings as part of their overall plan for the house and farm. As was seen by the many letters from neighbors, the owners have the support of many people in the area who, like staff, want to see the house and outbuildings restored and used. However, staff is concerned about the impact of such a large side wing on this important historic house and the overall setting. In the previous staff report, staff had recommended exploring a reconfiguration of interior space and new side additions to the rear 1960s section as possible solutions but the applicants have stated that this is the only location for the addition based on the interior space, the setting, and the trees. Staff agrees with the applicants that any additions should be designed so that the trees at the rear right side of the house are protected and preserved.

At this point, the owners are coming to the Commission for a second Preliminary Consultation to see whether the HPC will support this plan or if they need to consider another site on the property (outside of the environmental setting) for their house and have this property continue to be a rental property.

Staff asks the Commission to weigh the pros and cons of this complicated dilemma and give the applicants clear feedback as to whether they could support this proposal. It is clear that the applicants will not make plans to rehabilitate the house or outbuildings unless they are incorporated into plans to make this their residence.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the HPC provide feedback on the applicants' submission and the applicants respond to that direction.



RETURN TO: DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES  
255 ROCKVILLE PIKE, 2ND FLOOR, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850  
240/777-5370

DPS - #8

A

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
301/563-3400

APPLICATION FOR  
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Person: Don Pleasants

Daytime Phone No.: (301) 428-0800

Tax Account No.: 11-00915444

Name of Property Owner: William D. and Claudia Pleasants, Daytime Phone No.: (301) 428-0800

Address: 24012 Frederick Road Clarksburg Maryland 20871  
Street Number City State Zip Code

Contractor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Contractor Registration No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent for Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE**

House Number: 17700 Street Comus Road

Town/City: Dickerson Nearest Cross Street: Route 109

Lot: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision: \_\_\_\_\_

Liber: \_\_\_\_\_ Folio: \_\_\_\_\_ Parcel: 224.4027 acres

**PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE**

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- Construct
- Extend
- Alter/Renovate
- Move
- Install
- Wreck/Blaze
- Revision
- Repair
- Revocable

CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- A/C
- Slab
- Room Addition
- Porch
- Deck
- Shed
- Solar
- Fireplace
- Woodburning Stove
- Single Family
- Fence/Wall (complete Section 4)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ undetermined

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit # \_\_\_\_\_

**PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS**

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01  WSSC 02  Septic 03  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2B. Type of water supply: 01  WSSC 02  Well 03  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL**

3A. Height: \_\_\_\_\_ feet \_\_\_\_\_ inches

3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:

- On party line/property line
- Entirely on land of owner
- On public right of way/easement

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Signature of owner or authorized agent

9/18/07

Date

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Application/Permit No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Filed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Issued: \_\_\_\_\_

5

**William D. and Claudia Pleasants**  
**Adjacent and Cross Street Property Owners**  
**Subject Property: 11-00915444, 1740 Comus Road**

**No. 1**

Account Number: 11-03154781  
Owner Name: Robert K. Jackson  
Premise/Mailing Address: 18100 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 2**

**Account Number: 11-00915466**  
Owner Name: William D. Jr. & Claudia Pleasants  
Premise Address: 22610 Old Hundred Road  
Barnesville, Maryland 20838  
Mailing Address: 24012 Frederick Road  
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871

**No. 3**

Account Number: 11-00913695  
Owner Name: Norma Checkley, et al  
Premise Address: 17100 Comus Road  
Mailing Address: 17110 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 4**

Account Number: 11-02150207  
Owner Name: Laurence M. Frazier  
Premise/Mailing Address: 23901 Barley Field Lane  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 5**

Account Number: 11-02150093  
Owner Name: Robert Lee Payne  
Premise/Mailing Address: 23900 Barley Field Lane  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 6**

Account Number: 11-03310987  
Owner Name: Gunter E & PG Geisecke  
Premise/Mailing Address: 17701 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 7**

Account Number: 11-02516073  
Owner Name: Thomas F. Sarelas, et al  
Premise/Mailing Address: 17705 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 8**

Account Number: 11-02516040  
Owner Name: Judith K. Gallagher  
Premise Address: 17709 Comus Road  
Mailing Address: 17801 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 9**

Account Number: 11-02516062  
Owner Name: Hans Hanses  
Premise Address: 17713 Comus Road  
Mailing Address: c/o Posweg 26  
37671 Hoexter, Germany FC

**No. 10**

Account Number: 11-02516051  
Owner Name: Judith K. Gallagher  
Premise/Mailing Address: 17801 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 11**

Account Number: 11-00918642  
Owner name: Windmill Farm, LLC  
Premise Address: 18101 Comus Road  
Mailing Address: c/o Philip L. O'Donoghue  
8401 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 1100  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815



**No. 12**

Account Number: 11-03272093

Owner Name: Robert W. Sheaffer

Premise/Mailing Address: 17401 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 13**

Account Number: 11-03248275

Owner: David Langstaff

Premise Address: Comus Road  
Mailing Address: 24020 Old Hundred Road  
Comus, Maryland 20842

**William D. & Claudia F. Pleasants, Jr.**  
**24012 Frederick Road**  
**Clarksburg, MD 20871**

September 18, 2007

Ms. Anne Fothergill  
Historic Preservation Planner  
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Application for Hearing October 10, 2007 for 17700 Comus Rd., Dickerson, MD

Dear Ms. Fothergill:

Thank you for your continued help in our quest to receive permission from the Historic Preservation Commission to renovate and add to our property on Comus Road. We appreciate your responsiveness and willingness to meet with us, and our architect, to revise the plans once again.

Enclosed is the information necessary to complete the Application for Historic Area Work Permit:

1. Application for Historic Area Work Permit
2. Written Description of Project both (a) & (b) – under separate cover
3. Site Plan by Hutchison and Associates dated 8/30/07, page 5
4. Plans and Elevations for existing structure and proposed changes –  
Three Dimensional drawing by Hutchison and Associates dated 8/30/07, p. 1  
Front, Rear, Right and Left Elevations of existing structure and proposed  
addition by Hutchison and Associates dated 9/17/07, pages 3 & 4.
5. Photographs (previously submitted under March 21, 2007 application)
6. Tree Survey (shown on site plan)
7. Addresses of Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners (listed under  
separate cover, and previously submitted under March 21, 2007 application)
8. Boundary Survey Drawing, by Batta Goode & Assoc., Inc. dated June 10,  
2002

We look forward to attending the Historic Preservation Commission meeting scheduled for October 10, 2007 at 7:30pm. in Silver Spring. If you should have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 301-428-0800.

Very truly yours,

  
Claudia F. Pleasants

**William D. Pleasants, Jr. and Claudia F. Pleasants  
24012 Frederick Rd., Clarksburg, MD 20871**

**Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission  
Application for Historic Area Work Permit  
17700 Comus Road, Dickerson, MD 20842**

**Preliminary Hearing  
October 10, 2007**

**1. Written Description of Project**

**a. Description of existing structure and environmental setting, including their historical features and significance.**

The 6 acre historic site has a two story residence with 7 bedrooms. The first four rooms in the two story southern section were built in approximately 1860. Subsequent additions occurred in approximately the 1920's and 1960's. There are three log outbuildings on the site, and a stone foundation bank barn. The residence is surrounded by mature trees on the west, with a view of Sugarloaf Mountain across the front pastures. The views to the east are of pastures, and to the north of subdivision homes and farms. The parcel is approximately 224 acres, fronting on Comus Road, approximately 1 ½ miles west of the intersection of Rt. 109, where the Comus Inn is located.

James Pearee, a local farmer, built the property. The property stayed in the Pearee family until 1948. The Farr family purchased it in 1968, from whose estate the current owners purchased it in 2000. Over the years many changes and additions were made to the original structure, which consisted of 2 rooms on the first floor, and 2 on the second, with twin external fireplaces with stone bases and brick chimneys. The original foundation is of stone, with a dirt floor. Subsequent additions contain porches, kitchen, garages, additional living space, and a metal roof. The exterior was covered by the Farr family with stucco.

**b. General description of project and its effect on the historic resource, the environmental setting, and the historic district.**

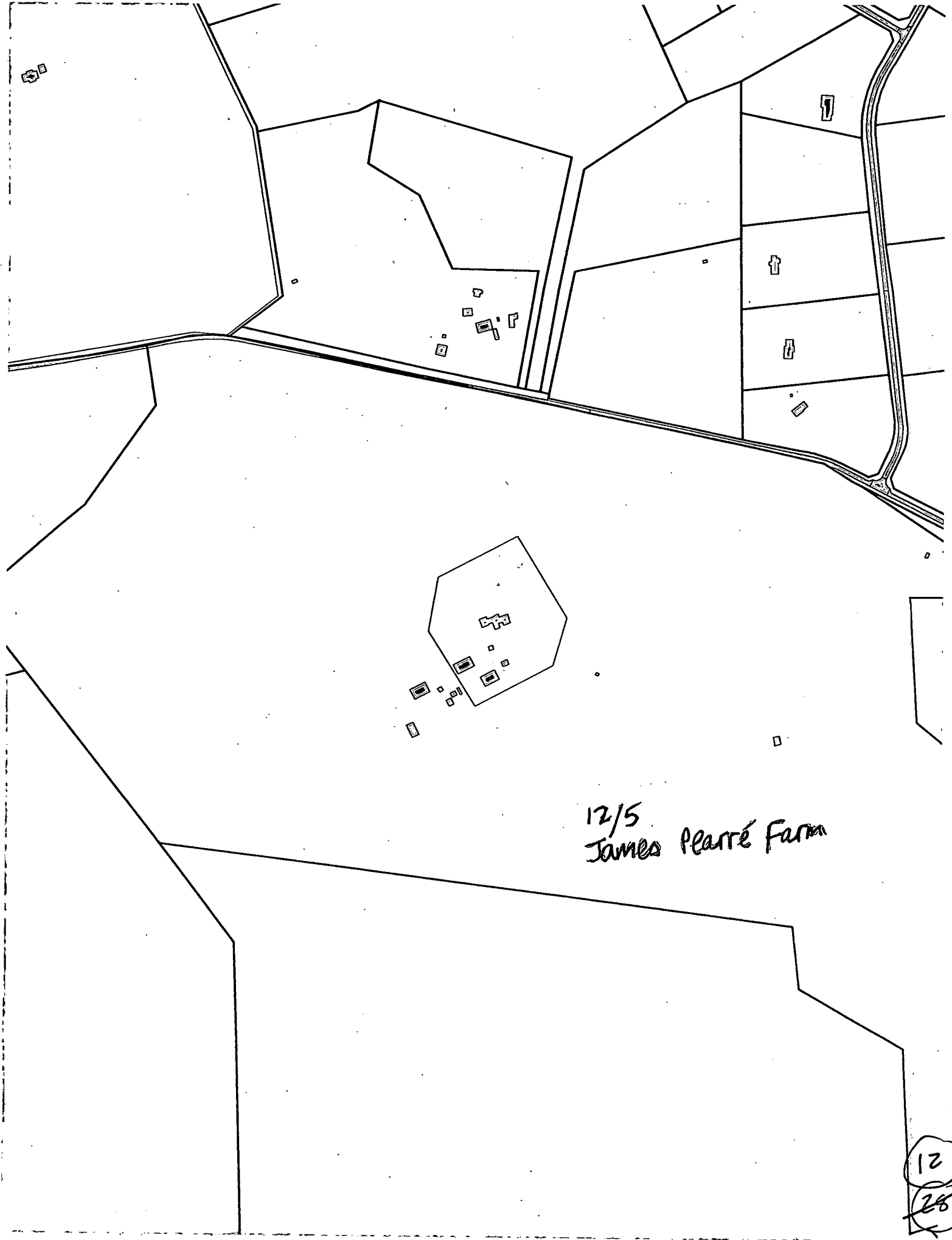
The proposed changes to the residence add a two-story wing, renovate the remaining footprint of the existing structure, and add a garage and patio/pool area. The addition is of stone, board, and metal roof, to reflect the character of the original structure and the native building materials. The intent is to disturb the existing mature trees as little as possible, while allowing the internal flow of the rooms to reflect modern living.

Page 2

October 10, 2007 Hearing

The owners have met with Historic Preservation Staff on numerous occasions over the last three years, including several site visits. The owners have consulted with historical architects, tree conservation experts, historic preservation groups, and adjacent property owners. The proposed project has been significantly reduced in scale and height over these meetings, and more of the existing structure has been retained, including portions built in the 1920's as well as the original sections from the 1800's. The current architectural plans show the proposed addition is sited far back from the 1800's portion, and has been significantly reduced in size.

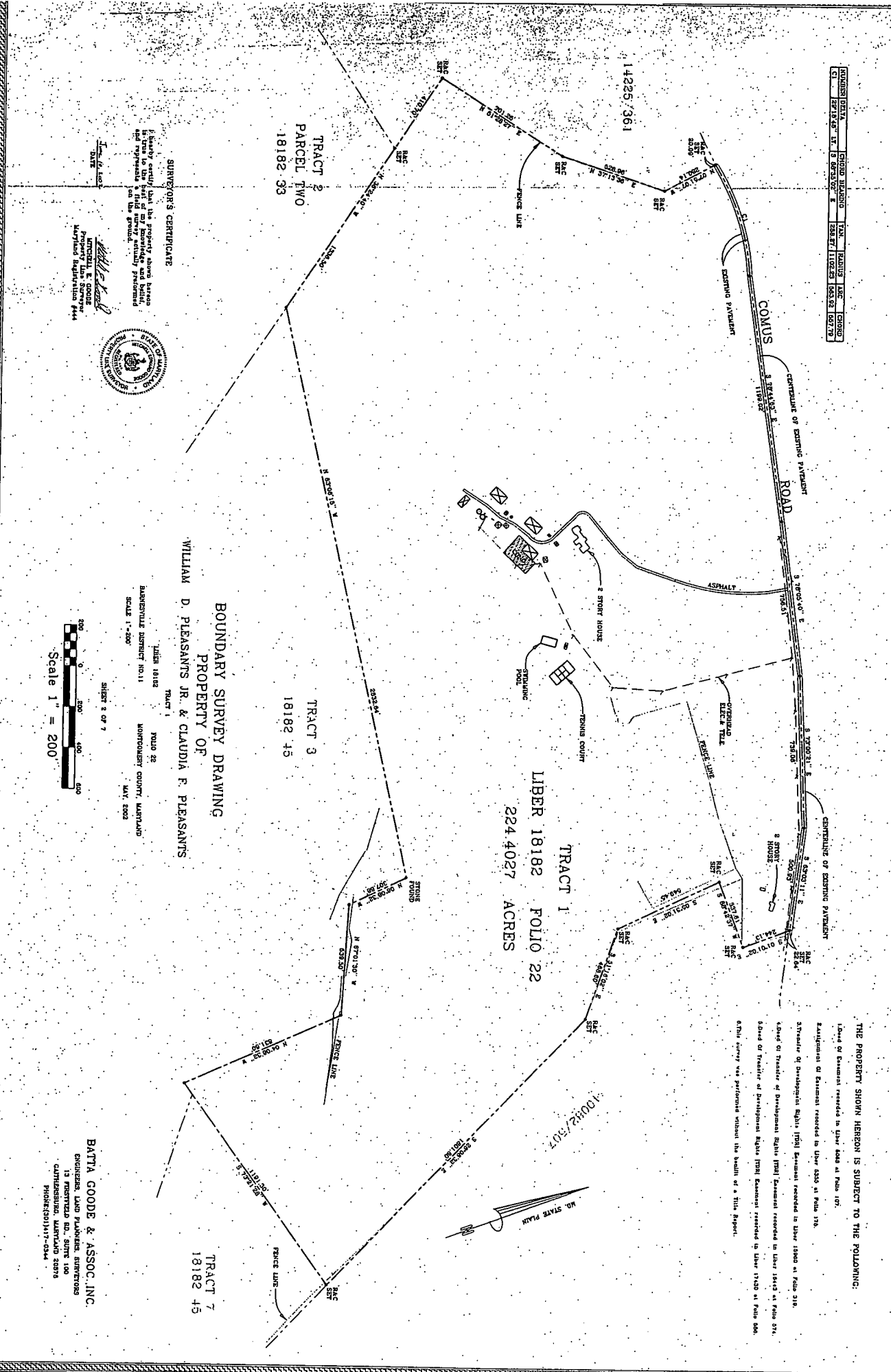
The owners intend to restore the log outbuildings and barn as part of the whole project if the residential renovations and addition are allowed. One of the log outbuildings may be able to be used as an ancillary pool house structure. The existing structure is in poor condition and needs renovation. The renovation is not economically viable as a rental property.



12/5  
James Pearré Farm

12  
28

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	AMOUNT
1	ACRES		224.4027



**SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE**  
 I, the undersigned, being duly sworn, depose and say that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original survey as shown to me by the client, and that the same is a true and correct copy of the original survey as shown to me by the client.

*William D. Pleasants Jr.*  
 WILLIAM D. PLEASANTS JR.  
 PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR  
 LICENSE NO. 11111  
 MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



**BOUNDARY SURVEY DRAWING**  
 PROPERTY OF  
 WILLIAM D. PLEASANTS JR. & CLAUDIA F. PLEASANTS

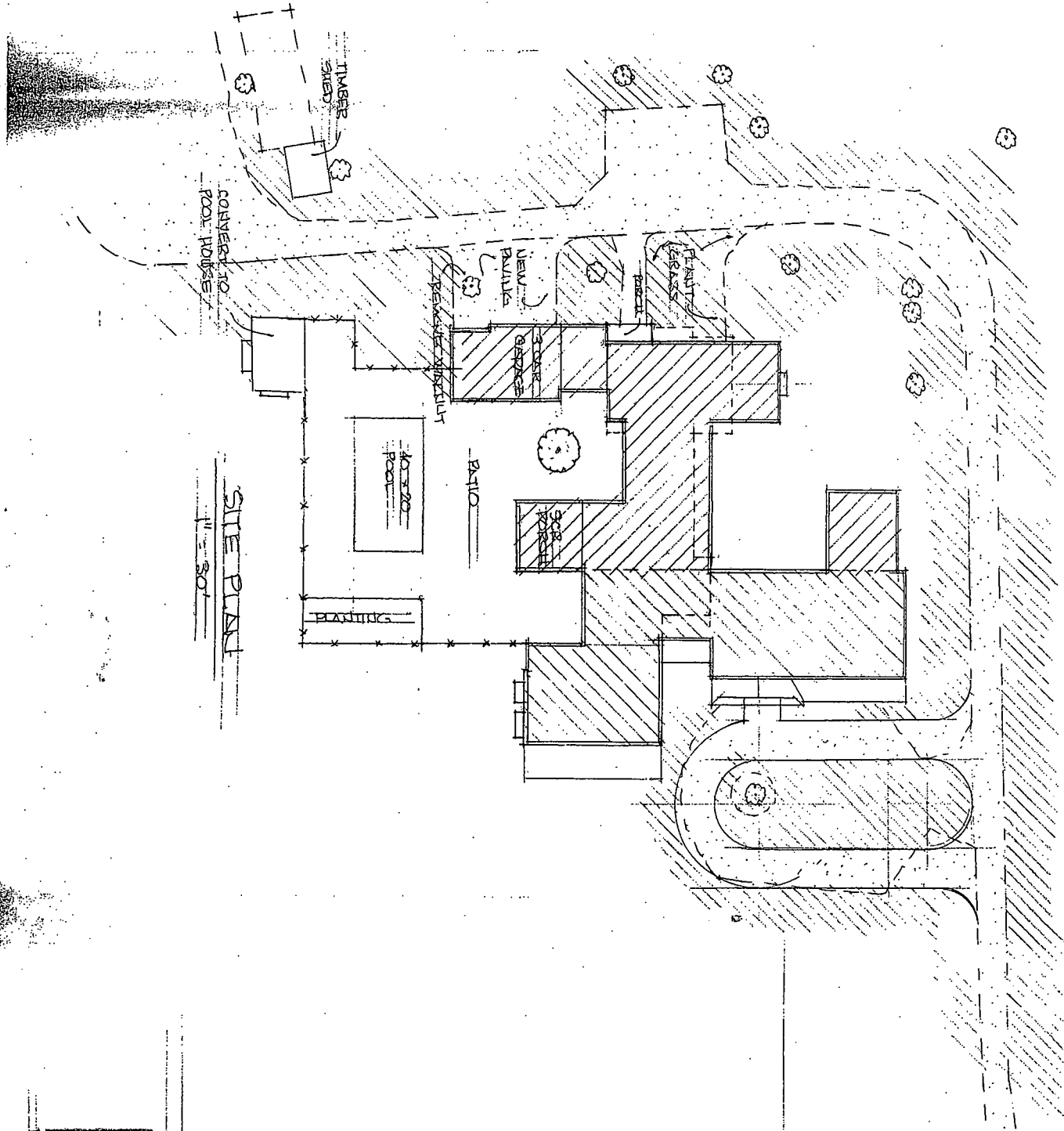
TRACT 1  
 JOHN 18182  
 BARBERSVILLE DISTRICT NO. 11  
 SCALE 1" = 200'



TRACT 1  
 LIBER 18182 FOLIO 22  
 224.4027 ACRES

THE PROPERTY SHOWN HEREON IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:  
 1. Load of Easement recorded in User 8086 at Page 107.  
 2. Easement of Easement recorded in User 8250 at Page 318.  
 3. Easement of Development Right (DR) Easement recorded in User 18800 at Page 218.  
 4. Load of Easement of Development Right (DR) Easement recorded in User 18412 at Page 214.  
 5. Load of Easement of Development Right (DR) Easement recorded in User 17425 at Page 206.  
 6. Other survey was performed without the benefit of a title report.

**BATTA GOODE & ASSOC., INC.**  
 ENGINEERS, LAND PLANNERS, SURVEYORS  
 13 MONTICELLO RD., SUITE 100  
 CUMMERSVILLE, MARYLAND 20725  
 PHONE: (301) 417-0344



SITE PLAN  
1/4" = 30'

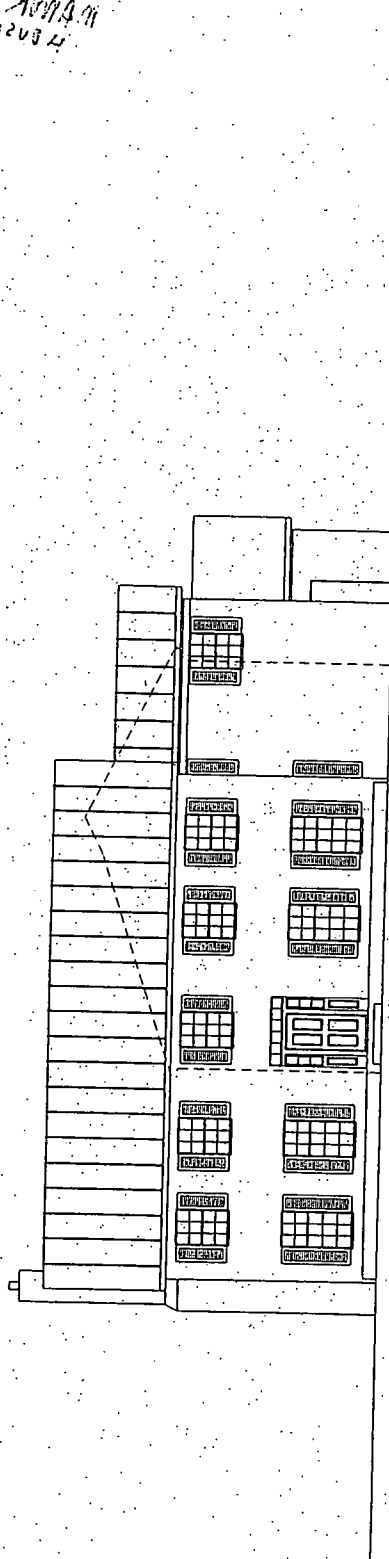
PLEASANT'S RESIDENCE

HUTCHINSON + ASSOCIATES, L.L.C.  
ARCHITECT  
11820 PARKLAWN DRIVE, SUITE 100  
ROCKVILLE, MD 20852-2529  
PHONE: (301) 770-9680 FAX: (301) 770-9163

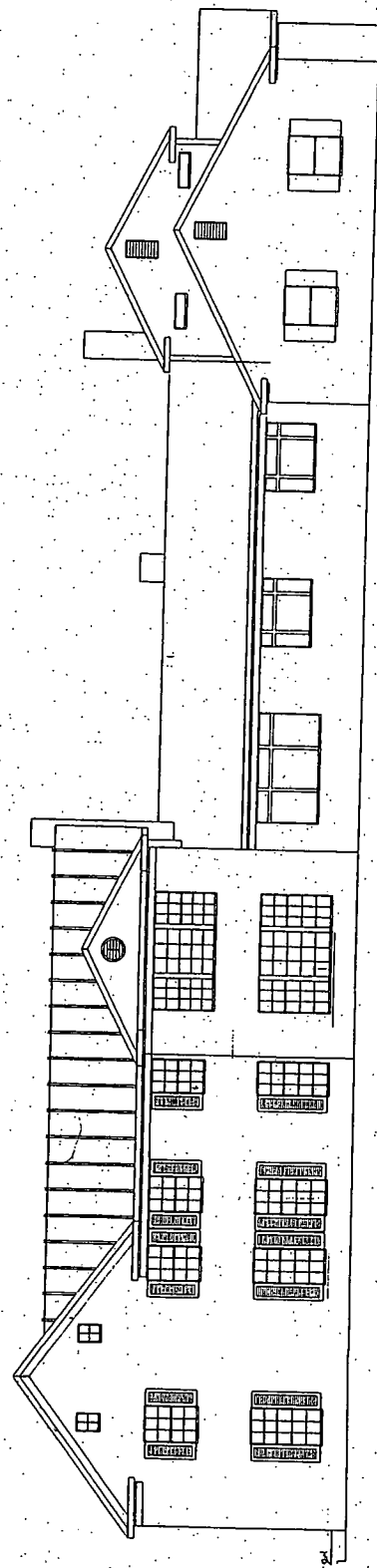
SA 8-28-07  
8-30-07

Existing Structure

AKK  
10/20/08  
4/20/08



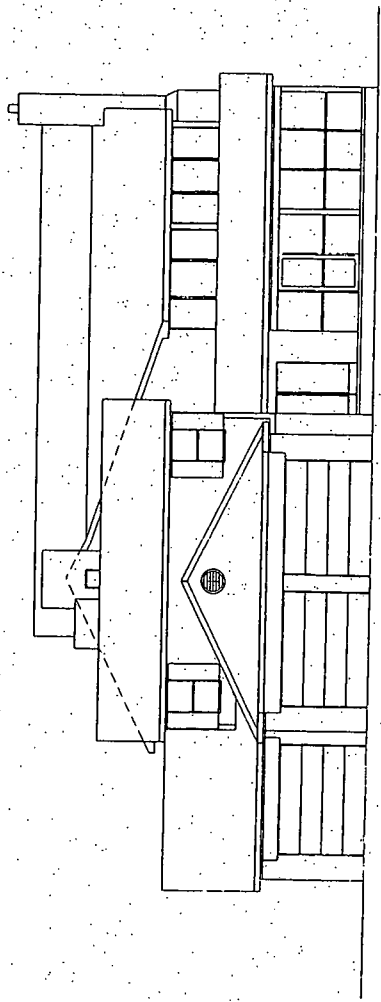
FRONT ELEVATION



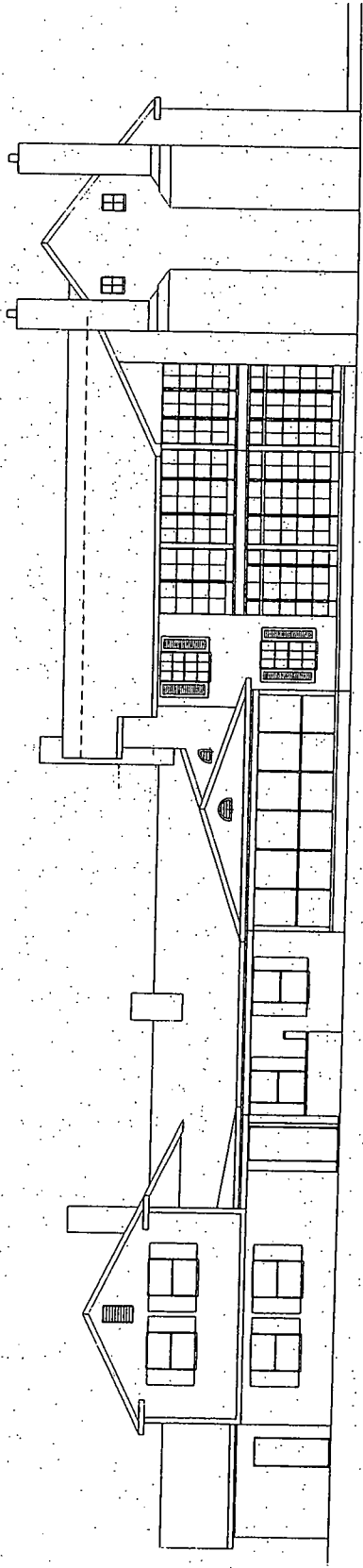
RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION



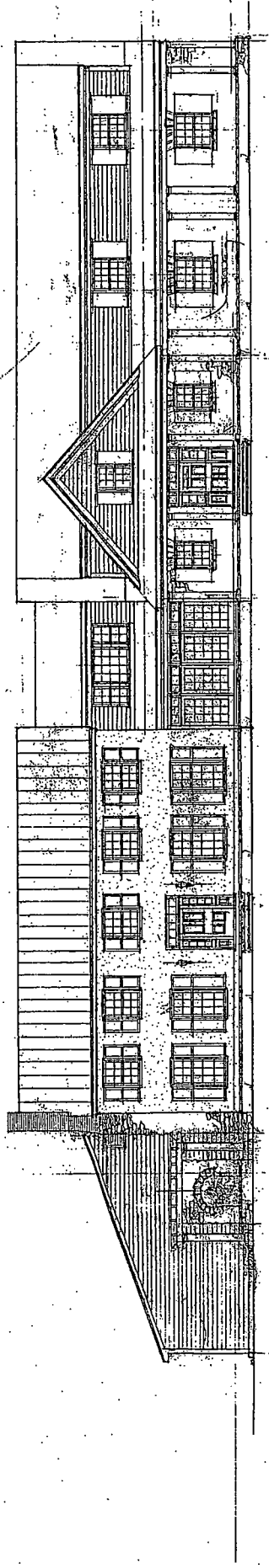
# Existing Structure



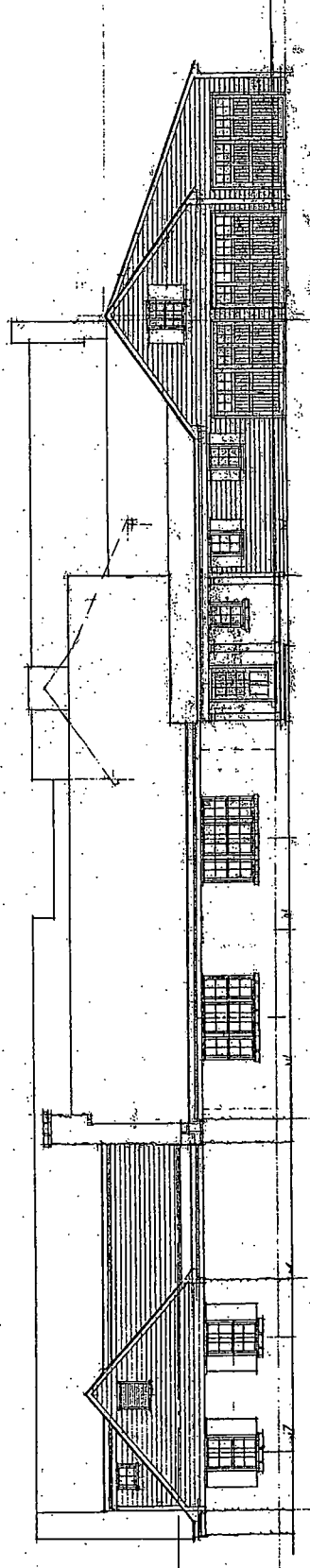
REAR ELEVATION



LEFT SIDE ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION

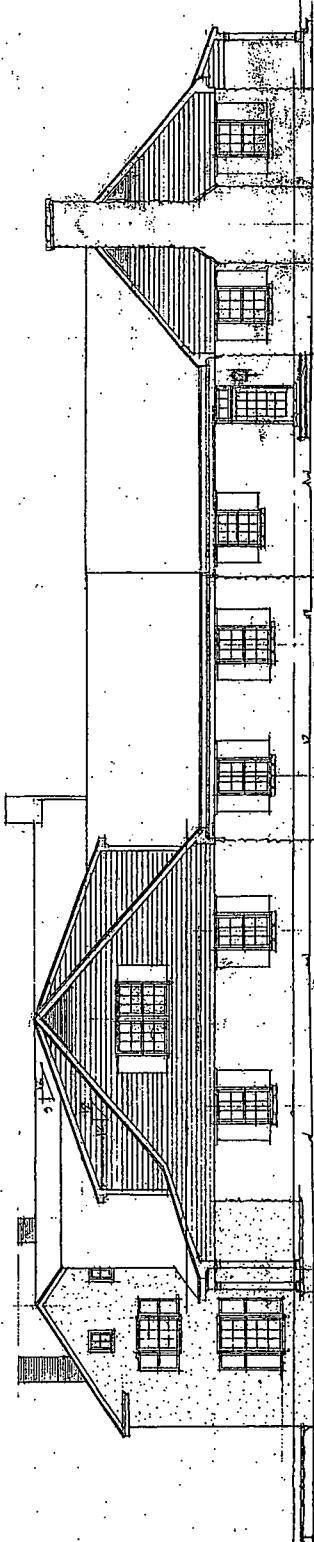


REAR ELEVATION

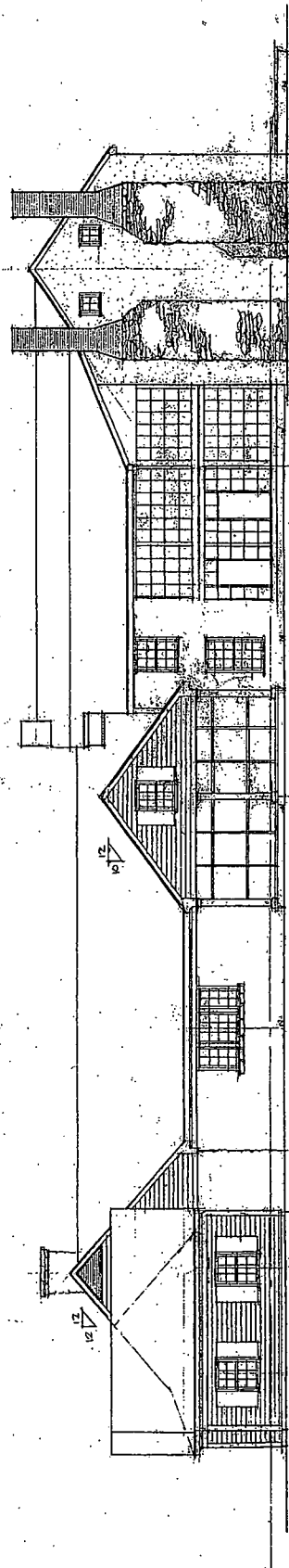
DESSANIS RESIDENCE

HUTCHINSON + ASSOCIATES, L.L.C.  
ARCHITECT  
11820 PARKLAWN DRIVE, SUITE 100  
DALLAS, TEXAS 75248-1700  
PHONE: (301) 770-8650 FAX: (301) 770-8169

3



RIGHT ELEVATION



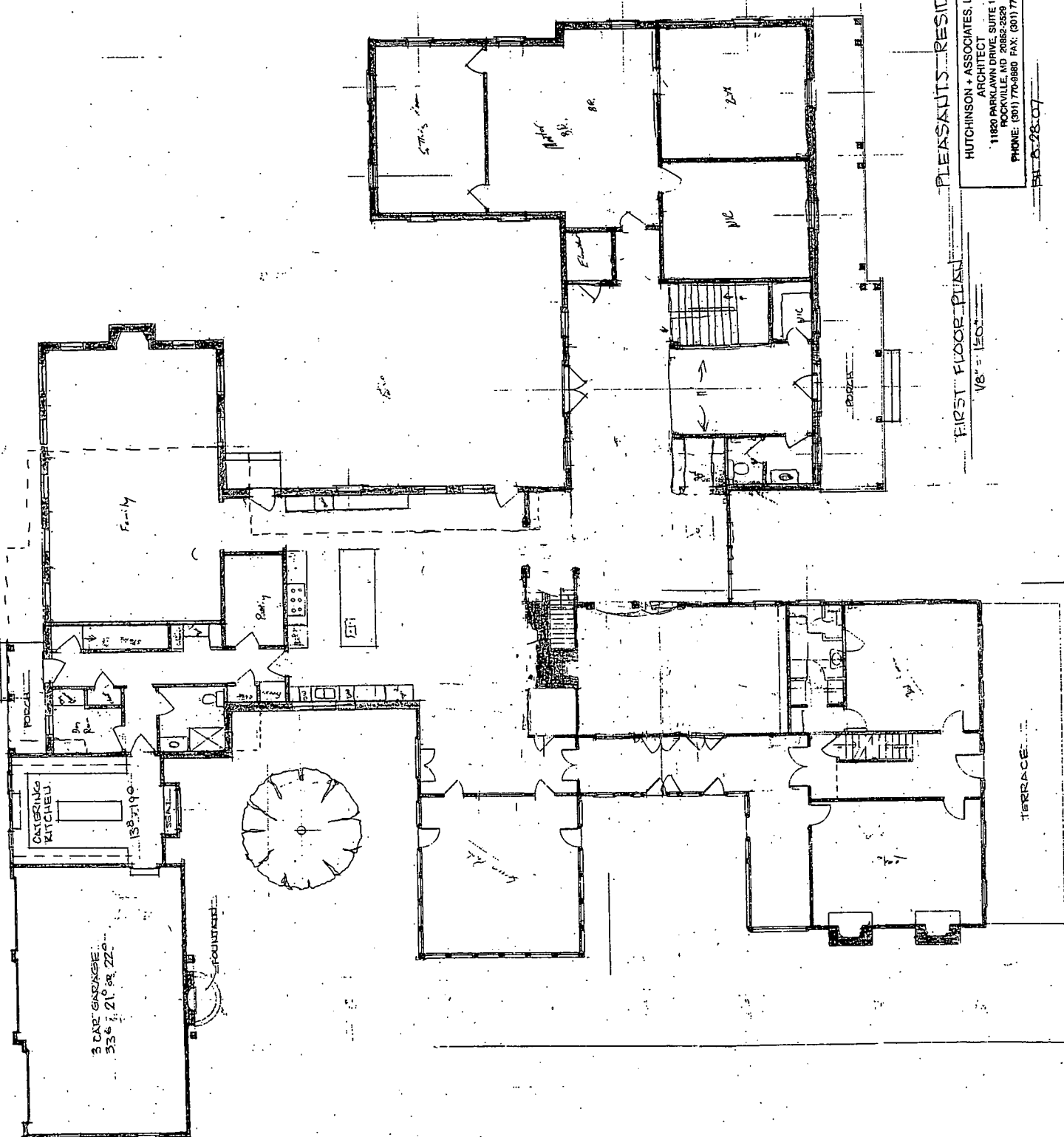
LEFT ELEVATION

PLEASANT RESIDENCE

HUTCHINSON ASSOCIATES, L.L.C.  
 ARCHITECT  
 11820 PARKLAWN DRIVE, SUITE 400  
 ROCKVILLE, MD 20852-2529  
 PHONE: (301) 770-8880 FAX: (301) 770-8198

4

2



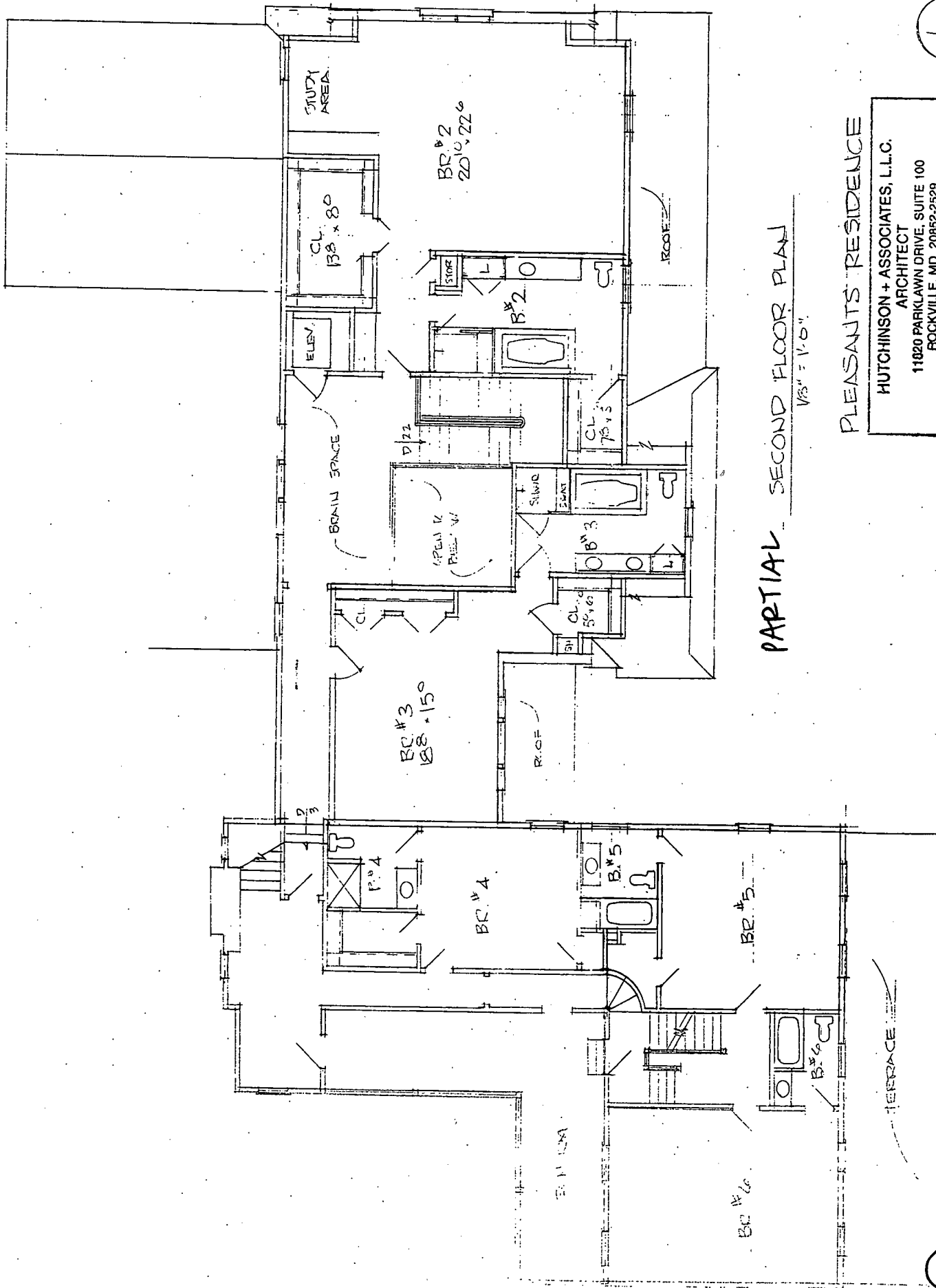
PLEASANTS RESIDENCE

HUTCHINSON + ASSOCIATES, L.L.C.  
 ARCHITECT  
 11820 PARKLAWN DRIVE, SUITE 100,  
 ROCKVILLE, MD 20852-2529  
 PHONE: (301) 770-9180 FAX: (301) 770-9183

FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
 V8" = 150'

BT 5-28-07

18-A



PARTIAL SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

PLEASANTS RESIDENCE

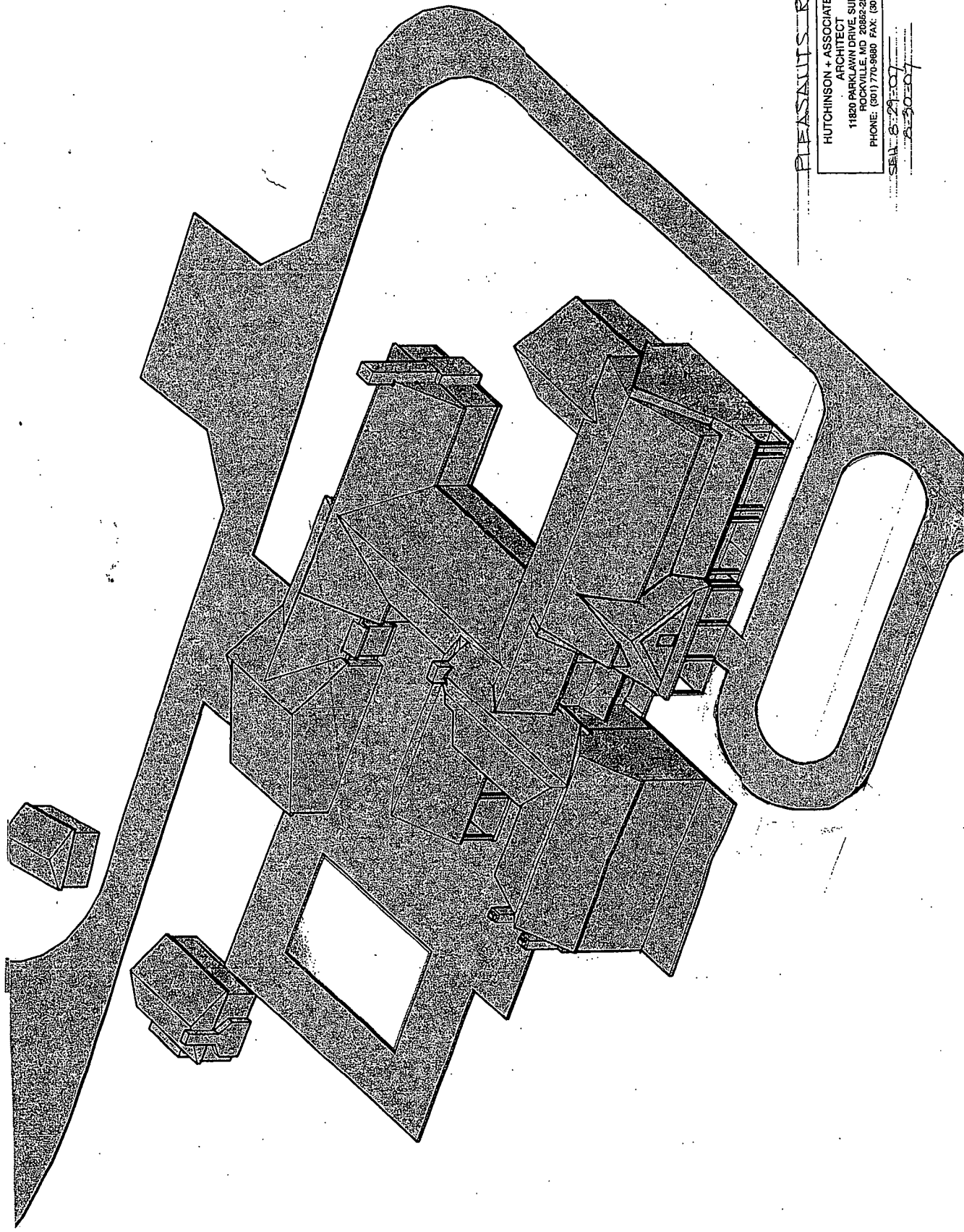
HUTCHINSON + ASSOCIATES, L.L.C.  
 ARCHITECT  
 11820 PARKLAWN DRIVE, SUITE 100  
 ROCKVILLE, MD 20852-2529

PLEASANTS RESIDENCE

HUTCHINSON + ASSOCIATES, L.L.C.  
ARCHITECT  
11820 PARKWAY DRIVE, SUITE 100  
ROCKVILLE, MD 20852-2928  
PHONE: (301) 776-9680 FAX: (301) 776-9183

SEALED  
2007

1



1 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

2 ----- X

3 PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION -  
4 17700 Comus Road

5 ----- X

6 A meeting in the above-entitled matter was held on April 11, 2007, commencing  
7 at 7:45 p.m., in the MRO Auditorium at 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910,  
8 before:

9

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

10

Julia O'Malley

11

12

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

13

David Rotenstein

14

Jeff Fuller

15

Lee Burstyn

16

Warren Fleming

17

Nuray Anahtar

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ALSO PRESENT:

Gwen Wright  
Stacy Patterson  
Judy Christianson  
Anne Fothergill  
Michele Oaks

APPEARANCES

STATEMENT OF:

PAGE

Don Pleasants

PROCEEDINGS

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MS. FOTHERGILL: This is a preliminary consultation for an individually designated Master Plan Site, the James Pearre Farm. This is a circa 1857 Greek Revival house that was in the Pearre family for about a hundred years, and at the time of the designation on the Master Plan, the larger farm, the environmental setting was reduced to only 6.7 acres which are now on the Master Plan so as not to include the non-historic buildings that were used for farming because it is a farm.

And before the property was listed on the Master Plan, there were a number of additions to this house, including sections that were built in the 1920s and the 1960s. The applicants are proposing, as you saw in your packet, to construct a two story side addition, and they also propose to restore the historic outbuildings on the property. There is a bank barn and a collection of log outbuildings, a double corned house and a smokehouse.

And what I would like to do is show you some visuals of the property and then the applicants will come up and talk about what they are proposing to do, and I just want to mention that there were a number of letters of support from neighbors in your staff report, but you also received at the work session six additional letters in the record. But I'll show you the visuals and then we can talk about what they're proposing.



1 This is an aerial view and you can see the house here and the barn, and then the  
2 working farm that's outside of the environmental setting. But you can see that the house has been  
3 added on to. You can also see well in these aerial shots the trees that the applicants are proposing  
4 to protect, and that is why they have located the addition where they have. So you'll note that here  
5 towards the rear right of the house.

6 And this is the front of the house. And that right section that you can see is  
7 approximately where they are proposing to build the addition is actually set a little forward of that  
8 as you can see in your plans in your packet. And this is the right side, and the new wing would  
9 come out here, and is wider than the historic house, and is taller as you can see in their plan.

10 This is just walking around the house. And these are some of the trees that they  
11 are proposing to protect by not constructing the addition near the trees. And this is the view that  
12 they want to maximize. This is the wonderful view of Sugarloaf Mountain. It's really a  
13 beautiful farm and a beautiful setting. This is the back of the house, one of the later additions.  
14 And then this is looking down towards those outbuildings which are very significant and are in  
15 need of restoration. Some have been neglected and some have been sort of not so well attended to.

16 And part of the overall plan for the property would be to build the new wing and  
17 then also to restore the outbuildings as part of their plan. And this is going around the left side.  
18 Again, this is towards the back of the house, the later addition and those are the double chimneys  
19 that are called out in the designation as a significant feature.

20 The concern staff has is the impact of such a large prominent addition to this  
21 house. That it could detract from the historic house and adversely affect it. So the applicants are  
22 here. They've been waiting, they've been here since the beginning of the meeting. I'm sure they're  
23 eager to come up and would like to talk to you and see if you think this is a possibly approvable  
24 addition.

25 MS. O'MALLEY: Could you just show that overhead, the one that best shows the  
26 house.

1 MR. FULLER: Madam Chair, it's a great piece of property, but I'm going to have  
2 to excuse myself on this property. My firm DNC Architects has done a fair amount of work with  
3 Core Development years ago and a little bit ongoing. So I won't be available to talk tonight.

4 MS. O'MALLEY: Would the applicants like to come up, please.

5 MR. PLEASANTS: Good evening, I'm Don Pleasants, and this is my wife,  
6 Claudia Pleasants. We appreciate the opportunity to come in tonight to at least present our case,  
7 and hopefully be able to come up with a resolution, or at least a decision for us on how to move  
8 forward with this property.

9 We purchased this property in 2000. It's a large farm. It has an environmental  
10 easement on it. The entire property can only have, I think it's 13 houses on it. It's 1125 acres.  
11 And our plans are to build our home some place on that property. Initially when we first bought  
12 the property, we had no intention of trying to build at the location of the existing house. I just, it's  
13 not a house that is suitable for our needs.

14 It's our intention to try build someplace on the property. And originally we had no  
15 intention of trying to build at this location because of the condition of the old house. The  
16 configuration of it, and just everything about the house itself doesn't lend itself to very modern  
17 living. And certainly not of a size that we need.

18 We have a very large family. On holidays we'll have somewhere close to 50 and I  
19 have to do all the cooking. So we've a nice large kitchen. And we worked with staff and trying to  
20 come up with different approaches. We've met on the site a couple of times. Anne Fothergill has  
21 been out and looked at it. Gwen Wright has been out and looked at the property. And as you can  
22 see from looking at the photographs on this house, it has had lots of modifications to it over the  
23 years. The original part of the house was built in, somewhere around, I think it was 1857 or 9,  
24 somewhere around that time frame.

25 And the original part of the house was only a small portion of the addition, the  
26 section that has the twin chimneys on it. There was another addition added on the side of that.

1 And then in the approximately 1920s the back section was added on, and then again in the 1960s  
2 another section was added and the whole place was stuccoed at that time.

3 So really all you're seeing there that's original, I think, is some of the roof, the two  
4 fireplaces, and the windows, and you've got the stucco covering over it. And what we're proposing  
5 to do is the 1960s addition is basically tear that off and in essentially the same footprint of that  
6 piece, but another addition in that section.

7 Very little change in the size of that. A little bit of additional width and slight  
8 additional height on that portion of it. Then on the, as you're approaching the house on the right  
9 side, we're proposing a fairly large addition. And I've tried, I'm not an architect and went to, we've  
10 been dealing with architects, and this is our fourth iteration of plans on this thing, and I finally  
11 decided on this one that, after talking with staff, I tried to come up with something that I thought  
12 might work.

13 So I've drawn this up. I know an architect can improve dramatically on the  
14 appearance of what I've put together in the package that you've got there. But, from a physical  
15 layout on the site, I don't know much else that we can do. Because we've explored lots of other  
16 alternatives on the site, and any other alternative we think we would get into the trees, or we'd get  
17 into the structures, the log structures behind the house.

18 So our goal tonight, I think, is to try to find out whether or not what we are  
19 proposing is somewhere along the lines of something that would be acceptable. I think it would be  
20 a win/win situation for everyone. It'd certainly give me and my wife the ability to build on the site  
21 that we've actually kind of fallen in love with since we've owned the property. And we would  
22 really like to restore the outbuildings, the barns. It's really what I like about the property, or the  
23 outbuildings. If you want to know the truth, I don't like the existing house at all.

24 But I'm willing to try to work with it, and salvage what we can of it, and restore  
25 what we can of it. But we still need to make a decision whether to try to work with that site or to  
26 move to another location on the property. I'm maybe kind of rambling, but let me look at my notes

1 here a second, please. One of the reasons that the wing that's off to the right is as large as it, we  
2 need a ground floor master. My wife has had one knee replaced, and another one on the way.

3 So we really do need a ground floor master, and that's, when you do that you wind  
4 up with a fairly large footprint. The existing house itself doesn't lend itself to the master. I can put  
5 an office in a portion of it, and we can use part of it for a community type room for our family  
6 when we have gatherings, but the rest of the ground floor of that house is really not suitable for  
7 modern living.

8 The ceiling is not very high, and one of the problems we've got with this house is  
9 that similar to the house the gentleman was talking about earlier, it's built very close to the ground.  
10 In fact, there are portions of this house where the dirt on the outside grade is up on the, higher than  
11 the bottom of the floor joists by probably 6 or 8 inches, and that doesn't even meet current codes.

12 And by putting the wing on the right side, I can accomplish grading that will  
13 allow me to bring that grade down around the rest of that house and not create a problem with the  
14 trees. The addition, if we did put on, has a portion, I've narrowed that portion down as narrow as I  
15 can reasonably make it in order to keep the height of the roof as low as it is. And it is still higher  
16 than the existing house. But I set it back, as you can see from one of the elevations there, I think  
17 it's the north elevation. There's some broken lines that show how far that sets back behind the  
18 other portion of the house.

19 And the purpose of doing that was to try to at least create some what of a back set  
20 so that the old portion of the house sat out front and was at least kind of the first thing you see  
21 when you approach the property. The house sets, the current house sets right at 1000 feet off of  
22 the roadway. And it is private property. And we don't have any neighbors that are very close to us  
23 from that perspective.

24 We do have one house that's been built right across from the driveway, which is  
25 kind of contemporary in design. So we're not detracting, I don't believe, from the neighborhood.  
26 And we really want to try to build a nice looking place there.

1 MS. O'MALLEY: Well, how about if I suggest this, we do have one speaker from  
2 Historic Medley, and maybe we could let her make her comments. And then I know the  
3 commissioners have a couple of questions.

4 MR. PLEASANTS: Okay, certainly.

5 MS. CASH: I'm Carry Cash, and with Historic Medley District. And the whole  
6 neighborhood held it's breath when we heard the Pearres were selling this property, and there were  
7 tears everywhere. But the Pleasants bought the property and you can see from the number of  
8 letters how much support there is. The biggest concern of Historic Medley was that the old house,  
9 which we have pictures that show it quite different from this.

10 It really went through some hard times during the '60s. Our pictures were from  
11 earlier than that, and we were concerned that it had fallen in such disrepair. So whatever can be  
12 done to integrate it into the lifestyle of the new owners would be or, or the current owner, would  
13 certainly be a great relief that the old house can be preserved.

14 Looking at the plans that are shown tonight, it looks, the new addition looks out of  
15 scale, but I'm looking at drawings and I haven't been on the property in a number of years. If there  
16 is anything which Historic Medley can do, Vicki Crawford, one of the neighbors, contacted us and  
17 said, would you talk to the Pleasants about what they're trying to do and so we thought maybe we'd  
18 probably hear from you, but we'll be glad to help if we can.

19 We would like to save the old building, and we appreciate that it doesn't fit their  
20 life, but it, in its day it was, it was the MacMansion of its day. And so, it's scale needs to be kept  
21 to some extent, it needs to be able to read that way from some direction, if that's at all possible.  
22 Thank you.

23 MS. O'MALLEY: Any questions? Okay, thanks. Did any of the commissioners  
24 have questions at this point. I'm sorry if I interrupted you. Did you have other things that you  
25 wanted to say?

26 MR. PLEASANTS: The only thing that I was going to say is, I'd like to get

1 guidance really so I can make a decision go on with this. I'm getting a lot of pressure to get a  
2 house built on the site, and I need to make a decision whether to try to continue down this path, or  
3 to build on another location. I do have another location that I've already had parked, and I got  
4 confirmation back today that that is approvable park, and I just, I'd really like to make a decision  
5 on which way I want to go here on this property.

6 MS. O'MALLEY: Can I ask you a question. I'm not quite clear myself. There's  
7 the original portion of the house which I would assume is the front facade that's shown on 12. But  
8 it would just be that very first, just that front portion not the rear portion showing.

9 MS. FOTHERGILL: No, it's the rear portion that doesn't show.

10 MR. PLEASANTS: You see this break right here in the roof line, this portion of  
11 the house here to the left, I believe is log. I'm not positive, I believe it's log. If you're in the attic  
12 you can see the old gabled end of the house. It's still up here, it's just siding. And then this portion  
13 here was added on sometime between 1859 and I don't know what date. That's the only portion of  
14 the original house as far as, to my knowledge.

15 Behind that you're looking at twelve, the portion that's behind that front part was  
16 added on in the 1914, 1920 time frame, somewhere in there. The projection that's sticking out, --  
17 Anne, can you flip it to the side view for that, please? -- This portion from here back to along here  
18 was added on in about the 1920s. This section that's built out right here, I believe, and everyone  
19 else seems to believe, was added in the 1960s, and the addition back here was also added.

20 This is just looking at inside and outside and everything else, that's when it looks  
21 like it was added on. So the portion back here we're planning on completely tearing off, and  
22 rebuilding with something that looks more in tune with the existing architecture. And this has got,  
23 they're just metal windows and just doesn't look very nice at all, in my opinion.

24 And we were going to attach the new addition here and bring it out this direction  
25 is what we're proposing to do.

26 MS. O'MALLEY: Commissioner Rotenstein.

1 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Yeah, I have a question for staff. What's the period of  
2 significance for the building?

3 MS. FOTHERGILL: I don't believe it was determined in the designation, but part  
4 of what made it significant was the farm. That it was owned by this same family into the 20th  
5 century.

6 MS. CASH: The Pearre family is one of the earliest families in that area, and the  
7 part to the left is believed to be from the 18th Century and is designated, the exterior chimneys, it  
8 was designated as one of the earliest large farmhouses, even though it's only three bay, and then  
9 the son added on later in the 1850s, and then it was added on beyond that. So it's the multi-  
10 generational growth of the building back that's the L, and then as Mr. Pleasants indicated, the  
11 things that came in with the Farr's are from a different family, a different iteration, but the Pearre  
12 Family are, it's their adding on with generations.

13 MR. ROTENSTEIN: So the first floor of the 20th Century additions would be  
14 considered contributing to the building?

15 MS. CASH: Only, yes. They are.

16 MS. FOTHERGILL: They are until approximately 1948.

17 MS. O'MALLEY: So it would be that L.

18 MR. PLEASANTS: In keeping with history, we'd like to put another addition on  
19 it.

20 MR. ROTENSTEIN: I think the big question is where.

21 MS. O'MALLEY: I think that on first looking at this that the natural reaction is  
22 that, gosh, the addition is kind of competing with the house because it's so wide and tall. And so  
23 I'd almost look to see the addition come around behind more where you're taking down the later  
24 addition.

25 MR. PLEASANTS: Well, we are rebuilding where that addition, that existing  
26 addition is now. We're rebuilding that area as well.

1 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Did you explore rebuilding a little more and not having the  
2 large addition coming off the side of the original block of the building?

3 MR. PLEASANTS: You mean as far as making it longer?

4 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Go back rather than out to the side.

5 MR. PLEASANTS: I did look at that, and I really can't get a configuration that  
6 makes a whole lot of living sense. And believe me, I've looked at this thing for going on five years  
7 now. And there are a lot of large trees on the property that we're also trying to save. And it makes  
8 it, it's difficult to figure it out and lay it out much differently than we have it here now. The first  
9 layout we had on this property, from reading the historic significance of the property and  
10 everything else, we thought that we would be able to tear everything off except the real old  
11 addition, including the part that was built in the 1900s, 1420, whenever that was.

12 And we were going to separate from that part and pull out in front of it and build a  
13 house. Staff advised us that that was not appropriate, and that we would have to save the portion  
14 that was built in 1920. And we've been trying to work with that since.

15 MS. O'MALLEY: So would there be a way to come out a little bit and then go  
16 into a courtyard space, or a U shape more at the back?

17 MR. PLEASANTS: I don't believe on the back we can do that. I have looked at  
18 that. Like I say, I've worked on this for several years trying to come up with different approaches.  
19 I've talked to two different architects about it. I've had one architect that drew up three different  
20 sets of plans on it, and just unfortunately we never got further than just the basic lay out and  
21 elevations.

22 MS. O'MALLEY: But they were ideas that you didn't care for?

23 MR. PLEASANTS: No, I did care for them. But staff didn't care for them. And  
24 the reason for that is that we were really looking to tear off all the house except that one portion  
25 and separate from that so that we could save that and then, you know, build, you know, basically  
26 another house on the property there.



1                   But without being able to separate, and with having to save all of that portion that  
2 was built, you know, through the 1920s, we'd need to be able to utilize that portion of the house  
3 rather than separating from it, and just having it sitting there. I mean I, it means nothing to me to  
4 have it just sitting there.

5                   MS. O'MALLEY: Commissioner Burstyn.

6                   MR. BURSTYN: Thank you. You put a thought in my head here. Since you  
7 mentioned that you did look at other portions of the entire tract, which is 224 acres.

8                   MR. PLEASANTS: No, it's 1125 acres.

9                   MR. BURSTYN: 1125, okay.

10                  MR. PLEASANTS: So I got plenty of ground to build on.

11                  MR. BURSTYN: Are there various sites that are acceptable to you to build an  
12 entirely new home on while at the same time preserving an acceptable environmental setting  
13 around the old house and preserving the old house to keep it, you could use it as a guest house and  
14 then pick a totally other area, possibly with it's own entrance road that goes into a totally new  
15 house. I don't know what other, what you would think of that.

16                  MR. PLEASANTS: I thought exactly what you're saying. Staff has  
17 recommended that I separate and make it a guest house, but you know, I guess I got the same  
18 comment guest and fish, start to snow after about three days. And I don't want to make it --

19                  MR. BURSTYN: I mean you can just preserve it for the county. I mean, you just  
20 make sure that it's preserved.

21                  MR. PLEASANTS: Oh I could do that, but I really don't have a whole lot of  
22 financial incentive to do that.

23                  MR. BURSTYN: Yeah, I mean, what we're concerned about is that the house  
24 does not deteriorate just from sitting.

25                  MR. PLEASANTS: Oh, I understand that.

26                  MR. BURSTYN: So that the outside is preserved.

1 MR. PLEASANTS: I know I've got to keep the house dry. But that's probably  
2 what I'll wind up doing if I, it's, I've got a tenant in it right now.

3 MR. BURSTYN: Because I would certainly like --

4 MR. PLEASANTS: But having the tenant in it, in the winter time they don't want  
5 to pay rent because of the fuel bill trying to keep that place heated. And you know, it just doesn't  
6 make economic sense for me to spend a lot of money on that property unless I'm going to be able  
7 to live on that site. And I think it would be a shame to, you know, not see these outbuildings  
8 restored. The outbuildings, in my opinion, have more historic significance than the house. The  
9 house the way it is now with the stucco on it and everything else, the only thing you've got are the  
10 bottom two thirds of the chimney that are original. The top portion, as you probably noticed, have  
11 been replaced with brick and fairly modern brick.

12 MR. BURSTYN: What's under the stucco, do you know?

13 MR. PLEASANTS: I think a portion of it has log under it. But I'm not sure of  
14 that. Just looking in the attic that's what it appears to be.

15 MS. CASH: It was framed. In the '50s it was framed.

16 MR. PLEASANTS: The whole section?

17 MS. CASH: Where it's stucco was left side.

18 MR. PLEASANTS: I think it may have log underneath the left side of the house.

19 MR. BURSTYN: So that's not your first choice to pick another site?

20 MR. PLEASANTS: No, my first choice is to build on this site. My second  
21 choice, you know, I have a site already picked out and already have a perk approved on it. My  
22 wife and I wanted to at least explore whether we were going to be able to build something on this  
23 site before we said, no, let's just go to another site and build somewhere else on the farm.

24 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Would it be economically viable for you to convert it to a  
25 permanent tenant house taking advantage of perhaps some of the tax credits available for you to do  
26 some of the rehabilitation?

1 MR. PLEASANTS: I don't think it would. From what I've looked at on that  
2 house, it'll cost a whole lot more to renovate that house and get it to the point that it's liveable than  
3 it would to build a new house. I'm sure all of you are aware that it cost more to renovate more than  
4 it does to build a new one.

5 MS. O'MALLEY: Can you tell me, I'm still having a little bit of trouble with  
6 what you have sketched out here.

7 MR. PLEASANTS: That's because I'm not an architect. Can I walk up there.

8 MS. O'MALLEY: The only thing is you need to speak into one of these  
9 microphones when you talk. So you're showing this larger house, it's actually going to be set back  
10 behind, almost all of the part that you're preserving.

11 MR. PLEASANTS: Yes. If you look right here on the north elevation, this is the  
12 roof line right here for the new. And this dotted line coming down here represent the front and  
13 rear of that house. And this portion right here is the, where it projects out. This part right here.  
14 This is the existing piece that protruded to the north previously. And it does set back behind this  
15 portion of the house. This is the front of the old house here.

16 MS. O'MALLEY: And then this is another section off to the side. But are you  
17 not having anything then behind the original house where you're tearing down?

18 MR. PLEASANTS: What's behind the original house back this way --

19 MS. O'MALLEY: Beyond the 1920s addition.

20 MR. PLEASANTS: This portion right here --

21 MS. O'MALLEY: Right, that's the 1920s or teens.

22 MR. PLEASANTS: That portion is still there.

23 MS. O'MALLEY: Right. But you're tearing down all of that other portion.

24 MR. PLEASANTS: This portion here you'll see has got the metal windows and  
25 just really doesn't look very compatible. This we're tearing off and rebuilding that pretty much  
26 entire section.

1 MS. O'MALLEY: So that's what this is represented on the north elevation?

2 MS. ANAHTAR: This is the actual photograph of that side that you're looking at.

3 That side is this. So they're basically adding from the center of the structure out.

4 MR. PLEASANTS: That's correct.

5 MS. O'MALLEY: But also he's tearing down the section that's behind it and  
6 rebuilding that. But I don't see -- is that what this is?

7 MR. PLEASANTS: You see that little hatched area right here, that is the only  
8 additional piece that I'm putting on that part back there. And basically, just rebuilding this almost  
9 in the same configuration. Not exact, but almost the same.

10 MS. O'MALLEY: We look at page 10.

11 MR. FULLER: This is the original 1850s piece of the house, right?

12 MS. O'MALLEY: No, excuse me, page 11.

13 MR. PLEASANTS: All of this portion of the house, this is looking at the house  
14 from the south, from the back. All of this stays. This portion here, this is a screen porch, that  
15 basically stays. And this here all gets torn off and rebuilt to almost the exact same configuration.  
16 It won't have the double height here. It'll have another wing that goes across.

17 MS. O'MALLEY: That's what I'm wondering if there isn't a way that you can  
18 have your larger massing back there rather than competing so much with the front of the house.  
19 Because as you come up to the house what you want to stand out is the original house. And if you  
20 can go ahead and build something large but it have be more to the back, then it doesn't compete so  
21 much.

22 MR. ROTENSTEIN: I'm sure we're losing something, a perspective of the  
23 elevation drawings, but the Chair is conveying, and I think dove tails with the staff's position and  
24 other members of the commission that the addition you've provided us with a drawing of appears  
25 to make the original historic house to be a dependency to a much, much larger building.

26 MR. PLEASANTS: It is.

1 MS. O'MALLEY: But you want to disguise that fact.

2 MR. ROTENSTEIN: And the standards that we have to work within need to  
3 ensure that that historic house reads as the dominant feature in that landscape and the scale and the  
4 massing of the additions that you provided us drawings with are not compatible with the Secretary  
5 of Interior Standards or with the Montgomery County Guidelines.

6 MR. PLEASANTS: Well, I guess, that's really what I'm trying to determine.  
7 Because I really, I don't think I've got the option of bringing the scale down. Can I move it around  
8 some more, maybe. But I really don't think I'm going to be able to bring the scale down.

9 MS. O'MALLEY: Well, I think if you could move it around some more, then it  
10 won't be competing as you look at the front, as you come up to the house. Do we mind if Historic  
11 Medley comments?

12 MR. PLEASANTS: Sure.

13 MS. CASH: I think that the drawings are really doing a disservice to what they're  
14 trying to do. They don't really show the amount of change that the porches are going to create in  
15 the look. That if this front, that the main, the old section of the house can read as the formal part  
16 of the house and they can design the back section, although it's larger, it wouldn't be unreasonable  
17 to have it be larger if it's perspective is softened by both materials and the use of porches and such  
18 things.

19 I think these drawings don't show that. I'm not sure what the third piece is on the  
20 right, that end gable piece, that kind of diminishes the size of the big house. So that part I don't  
21 have an answer to. But I think the larger block could be modified as an ancillary part to the, even  
22 though it's bigger in size. Through the porches it can look like the back part of the house or a  
23 secondary house.

24 MS. O'MALLEY: Like it would have two story porches?

25 MS. CASH: Yeah, something like that. But they already have a one story porch  
26 which right away is going to push it back away from the main house.

1 MR. PLEASANTS: Well that's really what I was trying to do with putting a  
2 porch on there was to bring down the, I guess, relevance of that portion of it and make it look more  
3 of a rustic look really.

4 MS. O'MALLEY: Other commissioners like to comment?

5 MS. ANAHTAR: I don't think these drawings are detailed enough for us to read.  
6 We do not have any floor plans, and we do not have all the elevations first of all. That is  
7 information, if I, as an architect, I don't think you're using your lot wisely. I mean, but you're not  
8 doing justice to your property by this design, this layout. Forget about the historic house. It is  
9 totally wrong from that perspective as well. That's my opinion.

10 MS. O'MALLEY: From an architect's point of view.

11 MR. PLEASANTS: Well, I had three other architectural plans that weren't liked  
12 either so.

13 MS. ANAHTAR: I think you need another architect for dealing with this type of  
14 buildings. Historic structures.

15 MR. BURSTYN: To add on that, and I'm not an architect, but when I look at the  
16 drawing on Circle 14, when I glance at this, and I guess this is all new part. It kind of reminds me  
17 of --

18 MR. PLEASANTS: No, 14 that's existing structure.

19 MR. BURSTYN: Oh, that's all existing.

20 MR. PLEASANTS: That's existing structure that I'm trying to tear down.

21 MR. BURSTYN: Oh, okay, then that's good. I was going to say it kind of looks  
22 '50 and '60s. Yeah, it does say existing right there at the top.

23 MS. O'MALLEY: The architects that you've been talking to are they familiar with  
24 historic properties?

25 MR. PLEASANTS: Yes.

26 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Are you going down the line?

1 MS. O'MALLEY: Yeah, would you like to, let's see.

2 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Commissioner Fleming.

3 MR. FLEMING: I've been sitting and listening to you speak and I was confused  
4 with a couple of things. First you said you didn't really like the place. Then you said --

5 MR. PLEASANTS: I didn't like the house. That's what I said.

6 MR. FLEMING: Right, the house, right.

7 MR. PLEASANTS: I love that portion of the property.

8 MR. FLEMING: This is where I'm confused. You said that you didn't like the  
9 structure, that's what I got.

10 MR. PLEASANTS: That's correct.

11 MR. FLEMING: Then you said you said you'd like to build on this site, and also  
12 I'd like to build on another site. So I'm trying to get to what you really want. Do you want to take  
13 this original house that you have here, and do you want it remodeled to what, to meet the specs of  
14 the historic preservation, is that what you're trying to get through?

15 MR. PLEASANTS: What I'm trying to say is, if I can build something that meets  
16 your requirements and as well meets my need, then I want to build on this site.

17 MR. FLEMING: When you say on this site?

18 MR. PLEASANTS: Right where this existing house is.

19 MR. FLEMING: This house. Okay.

20 MR. PLEASANTS: Has an addition to it. If I can't build something that meets  
21 your needs and meets my objectives, I'd like to make a decision and go ahead and move to a  
22 different location on the property and just build a house there.

23 MR. FLEMING: Okay, I understand.

24 MR. PLEASANTS: That's really what I'm looking to try to make a determination  
25 of.

26 MR. FLEMING: Then my suggestion, as the previous commissioner was saying,

1 you could get the plans, even I'm not an architect neither, but it's kind of hard for us to make a  
2 determination of how we can help you, we can't efficiently work with these type plans that you  
3 have now. That's all I have to say.

4 MR. PLEASANTS: Let me ask, I guess, one more question and then I'll be quiet.  
5 The massing of the house, the size of the house, it's a large house. And the existing property it's  
6 probably adding, I'm probably adding 5,000 square feet on what's already there. There's probably  
7 6,000 or 7,000 feet there now. This is about a 12,000 square foot total house. And the big  
8 question I guess is, is that type of massing going to work with your guidelines?

9 MS. ANAHTAR: If it is nicely done, yes. The problem here is that it just doesn't  
10 work the way it is. You are not using an approvable attach of this historic house, and then  
11 building on that to get the nice house that you like to have. I think what is being proposed right  
12 now the way it is is not bringing it to the next level.

13 MS. O'MALLEY: What type of things would you think that he should be  
14 considering that would tie in better with the historic house?

15 MS. ANAHTAR: Well, I mean, massing, for example, demolishing that existing  
16 addition and then rebuilding it just doesn't make sense. It's not improving anything. It's just not  
17 going to look right. And then having the new addition in the back right in the middle with the  
18 facade as it is being proposed with the window configurations, just roof configuration, everything.

19 MR. PLEASANTS: It was not my original preference.

20 MS. ANAHTAR: I mean just the way it is competing with the existing house just  
21 doesn't look right. I can be the same size, it can be a little bigger if it is done right.

22 MS. O'MALLEY: You almost already have the origins of the second there with  
23 your gable toward the back.

24 MR. PLEASANTS: I guess I'm confused.

25 MS. O'MALLEY: The new one. I mean, if you had your, I wonder if you had  
26 some kind of connector between the historic part and had your house also be cross gabled behind



1 the addition, behind the 20s addition.

2 MS. ANAHTAR: I don't think we can redesign this for you tonight. But  
3 considering the lot size and all the land that you have here, and knowing what we're used to seeing  
4 in Chevy Chase in much smaller lots, there's successful projects, I don't see any reason for not you  
5 being able to do something similar, a successful project.

6 MR. PLEASANTS: One of the big difficulties that my architect and I have had is  
7 trying to figure out how to bring an entrance into this house and keep the old portion of the house  
8 as prominent portion. The entry is just not suitable for an entry. It's got low ceilings in there, there  
9 are low doorways going up through the hallway. The stairs are low. It just doesn't work.

10 MS. ANAHTAR: Yeah, well since we don't have the floor plans we cannot give  
11 you any ideas on that.

12 MR. PLEASANTS: Well, I certainly have floor plans for it, but I didn't realize  
13 that you'd be looking at floor plans.

14 MS. ANAHTAR: I'm also seeing that you're creating linear patterns again, and  
15 usually people like to build next to the existing house to double the size and get the space that they  
16 want. That's not what you're trying to do. I don't even know how your layout will work the way  
17 you're --

18 MR. PLEASANTS: Well the layout works very well, believe it or not.

19 MS. ANAHTAR: Linear like that?

20 MR. PLEASANTS: Believe it or not, the layout works very well. But the  
21 difficulty I've had in massing this house is the height that I get. The deeper I make the house of  
22 course the higher the roof gets. And that's the problem I've got here on this site. And that's why  
23 I've tried to make it linear to bring the roof height down. The house is only, this addition I'm  
24 putting on is only like 32 feet in depth which is pretty narrow. It is not efficient to build that way  
25 certainly. It functions the way we've got it laid out now.

26 MS. O'MALLEY: Now is it appropriate to do a type of style that has the roof

1 come down so that the windows poke through the roof with little dormers across the front of the  
2 building?

3 MR. PLEASANTS: Yeah, I've looked at that.

4 MS. O'MALLEY: Not separate dormers.

5 MS. CASH: Colonial Revival.

6 MS. O'MALLEY: Yeah, Colonial, that wouldn't --

7 MR. PLEASANTS: I have looked at that.

8 MS. O'MALLEY: That's not appropriate for that.

9 MS. CHRISTIENSEN: You know, I think, if I may make a suggestion. I think  
10 we've spent almost 45 minutes on this, and I think it's clear at this point that the commission  
11 doesn't have the materials they need to really address this and be helpful. And that's what we're  
12 trying to do. We're trying to find a way that we can preserve the character and integrity of this  
13 building and still accommodate the needs of the owner. And could you get us some floors plans  
14 and just fax them to us.

15 MS. FOTHERGILL: Although I have to say that staff advised them to come for a  
16 preliminary consultation with what they had as a conceptual discussion. So I mean, I don't think  
17 they have floor plans.

18 MR. PLEASANTS: I do have floor plans.

19 MS. FOTHERGILL: Oh, you do.

20 MS. CHRISTIANSON: Well, it appears to me as a person sitting on the sidelines  
21 that the concept is probably not going to fly.

22 MR. FULLER: Since I can't make an official comment, but just an observer  
23 sitting on the outside, I heard the client, or the applicant make a comment that he was coming in  
24 more or less speaking to make a determination whether, I'll put it in other terms, is it going to be  
25 too painful to build at this location or to just go somewhere else on the property, and at least from  
26 what I'm hearing, I'm hearing this, we're almost telling him, we'd just assume him go build

1 somewhere else.

2 And I just think that the commission really ought to give a value judgment as to  
3 whether or not we really think that's the message we want him to go away with or not, or can we  
4 go to what he started to talk about a few minutes ago. He's proposing, he's got what, a 5,000  
5 square foot addition, do we think it's viable that there's going to be a solution that he can do a  
6 5,000 square foot addition and be able to make use of this part of the homestead.

7 MS. CHRISTIANSON: Well, we had one commissioner who said yes.

8 MR. FULLER: And I'm just saying, I think that's the question that I think the  
9 commission ought to be clear. Because otherwise, I'm afraid he's going to go build where it's  
10 painless.

11 MS. CHRISTIANSON: It's never painless.

12 MS. O'MALLEY: Well that would be, I think that would be useful to go down  
13 the line and have that information.

14 MR. PLEASANTS: That's really, I mean, very well spoken. That's exactly what  
15 I'm wanting to find out.

16 MS. O'MALLEY: Would you like to start Commissioner Rotenstein?

17 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Where to begin. Tough challenge. You do want to add a  
18 substantial amount to the historic building, and given my preferences, I think given the size of your  
19 farmstead, building somewhere else and finding some way to make the historic building  
20 economically viable to you so that you can have the lifestyle in the building that you want. If you  
21 have the opportunity to build elsewhere on the lot, I think that would be a good approach.

22 MR. FLEMING: Basically from what I heard tonight, and where the location is,  
23 I'm from the Up County, and if you could preserve this place, I'd like to see you do it.

24 MS. O'MALLEY: Well, that would be my thought. My thought is that if there's  
25 anyway you could possibly do it, I would want you to figure out a way to work your house into this  
26 project so that this house is again used as the main homestead for the property.

1 MR. BURSTYN: I think it's a good idea that Commissioner Anahtar that possibly  
2 to drive through Chevy Chase, because there's been numerous homes have been added on, and you  
3 have to, I think, look at them very carefully because you don't really, they're done so well, that you  
4 have to realize that's not what was there before. And maybe it could give you all some more ideas  
5 as to how to approach this.

6 Obviously, whether you add on or pick another site, it has to be yours to make. I  
7 think it's very important, of course, to preserve a lot of the original structure. Not the '50 '60 stuff  
8 obviously. And that it be maintained over the years, so even a hundred years from now it's still  
9 part of Montgomery County history.

10 MS. ANAHTAR: I don't have anything to add.

11 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Madam Chair, may I make one more comment?

12 MS. O'MALLEY: Yes.

13 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Given the age of the property, one concern that comes to  
14 mind is the potential for archeological resources in proximity to the house. I can foresee the  
15 potential for pribees, evidence of other dependencies in proximity to the house.

16 I would be concerned about impacts to archeological resources were any major  
17 ground altering activities to take place, and would be interested in finding out what the potential is.  
18 I don't know if the Historic Preservation Commission's archeologist has been to the site or not, or  
19 if that's even possible to request an opinion about archeological potential.

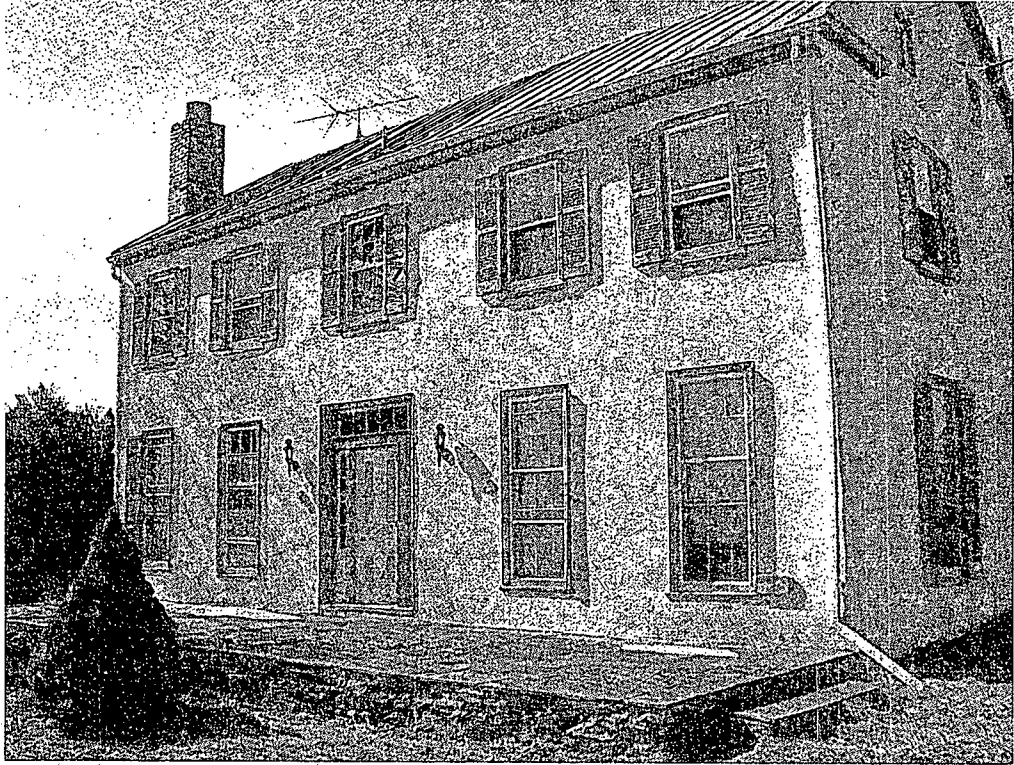
20 MS. FOTHERGILL: We certainly could request that the staff archeologist go out.

21 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Just a concern since we do have to take account  
22 archeological resources.

23 MR. PLEASANTS: Well, I thank you for your input, and I think you've answered  
24 my question for me. Thank you.



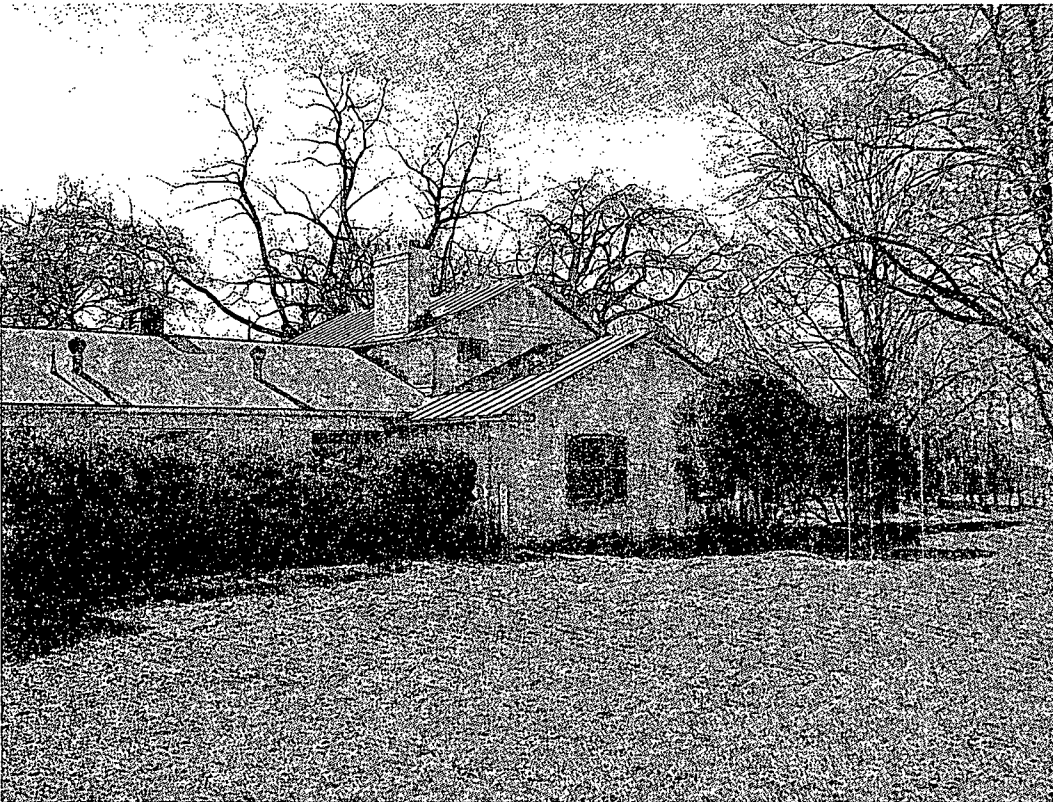
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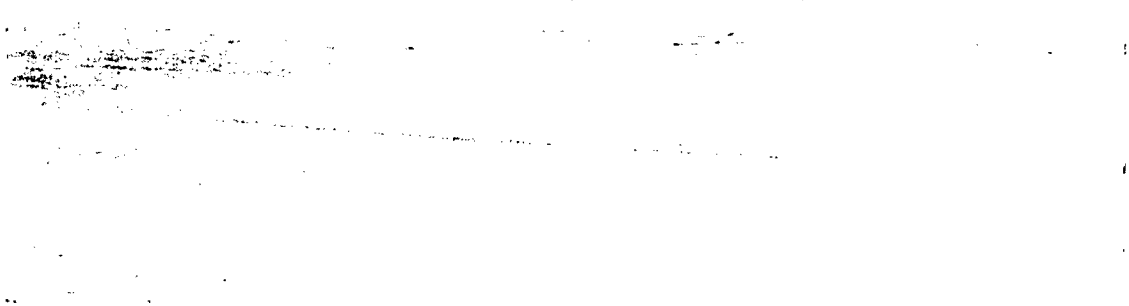
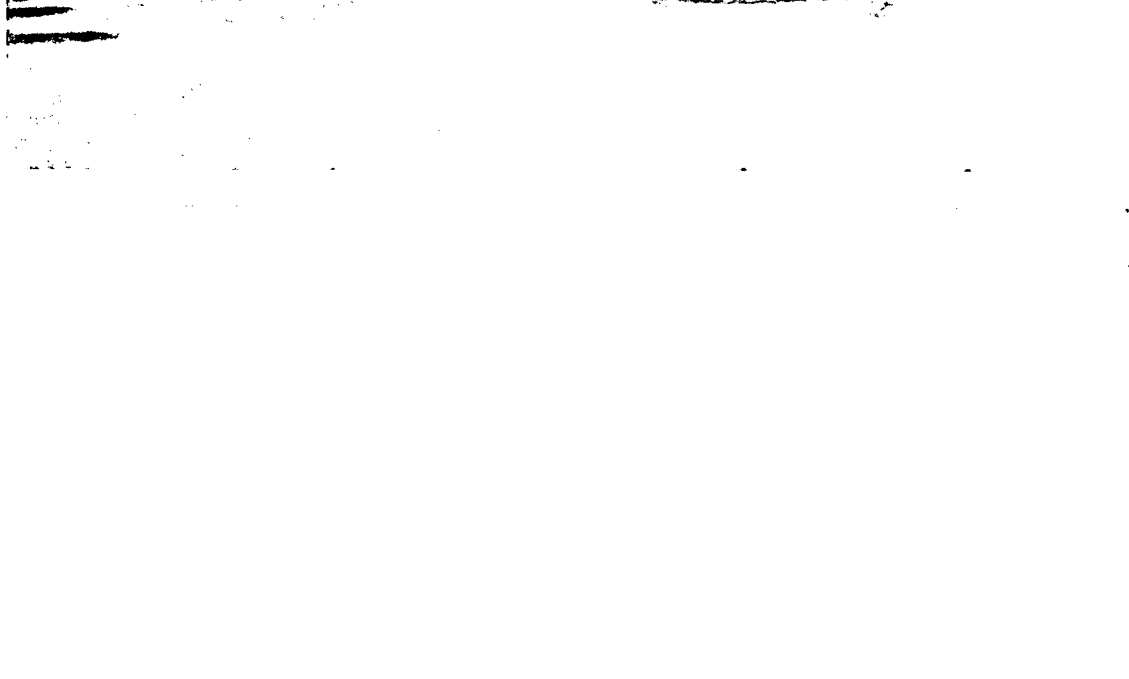


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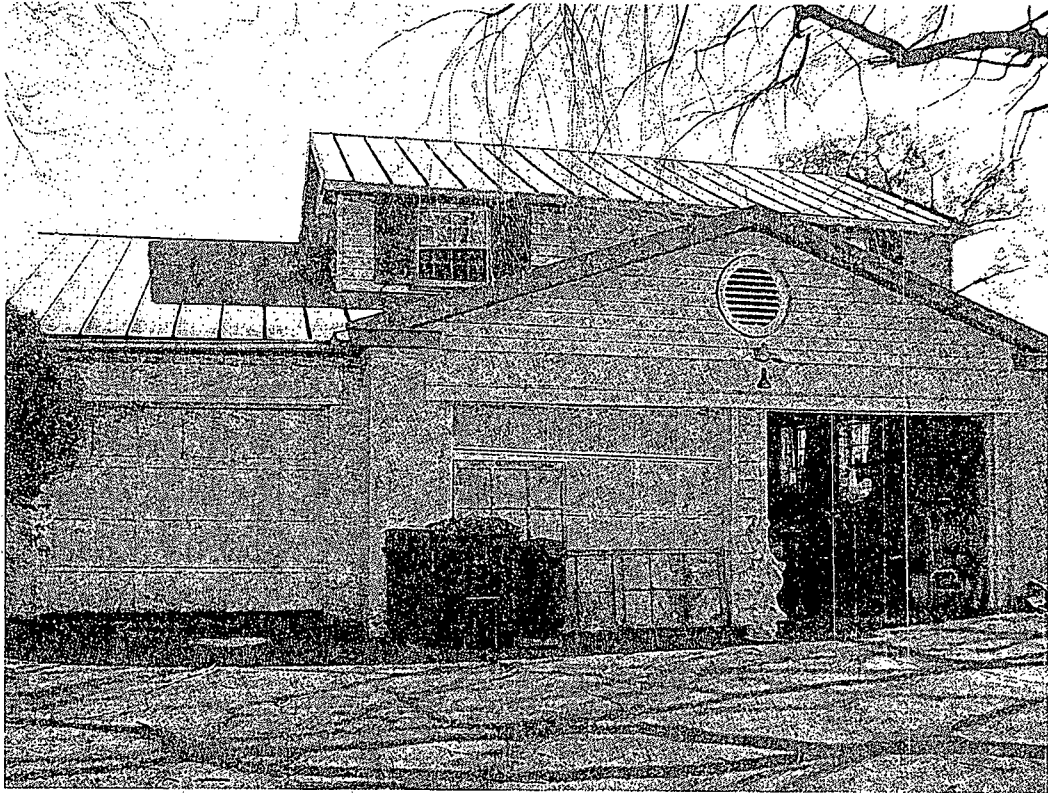


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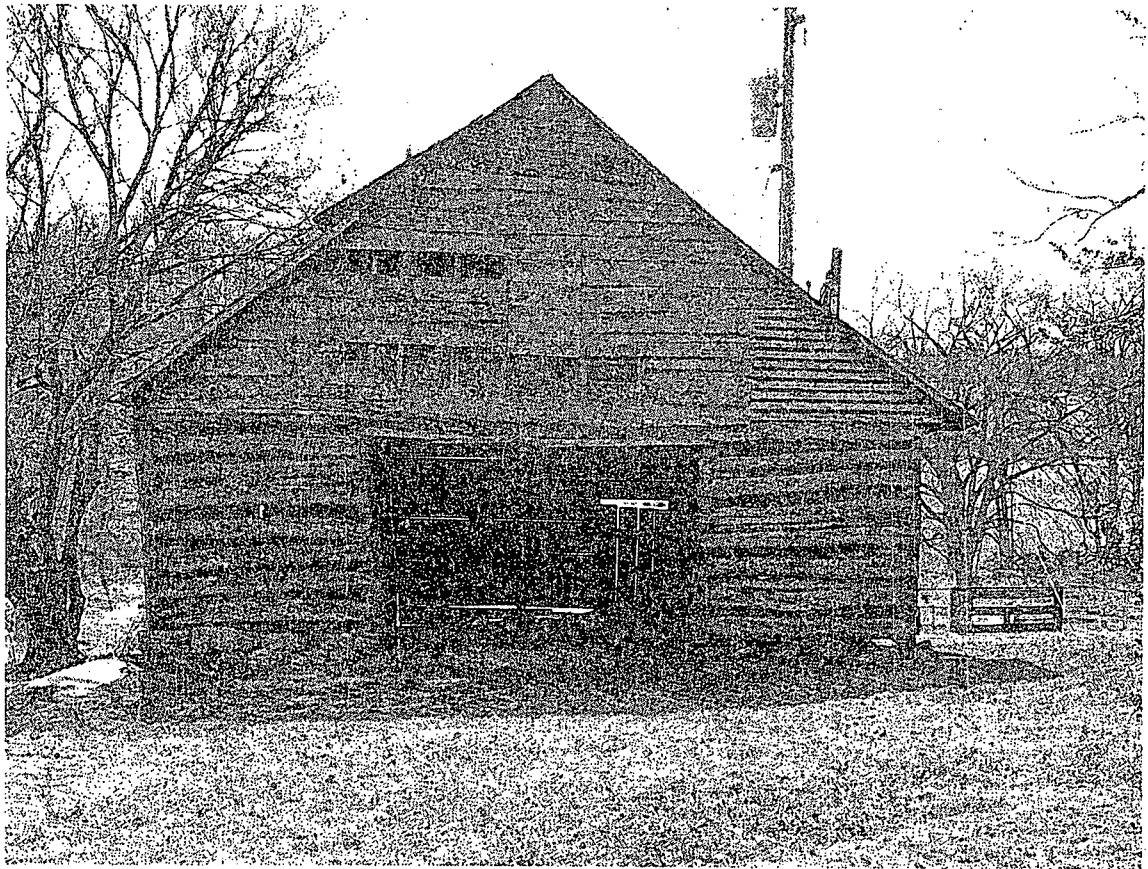
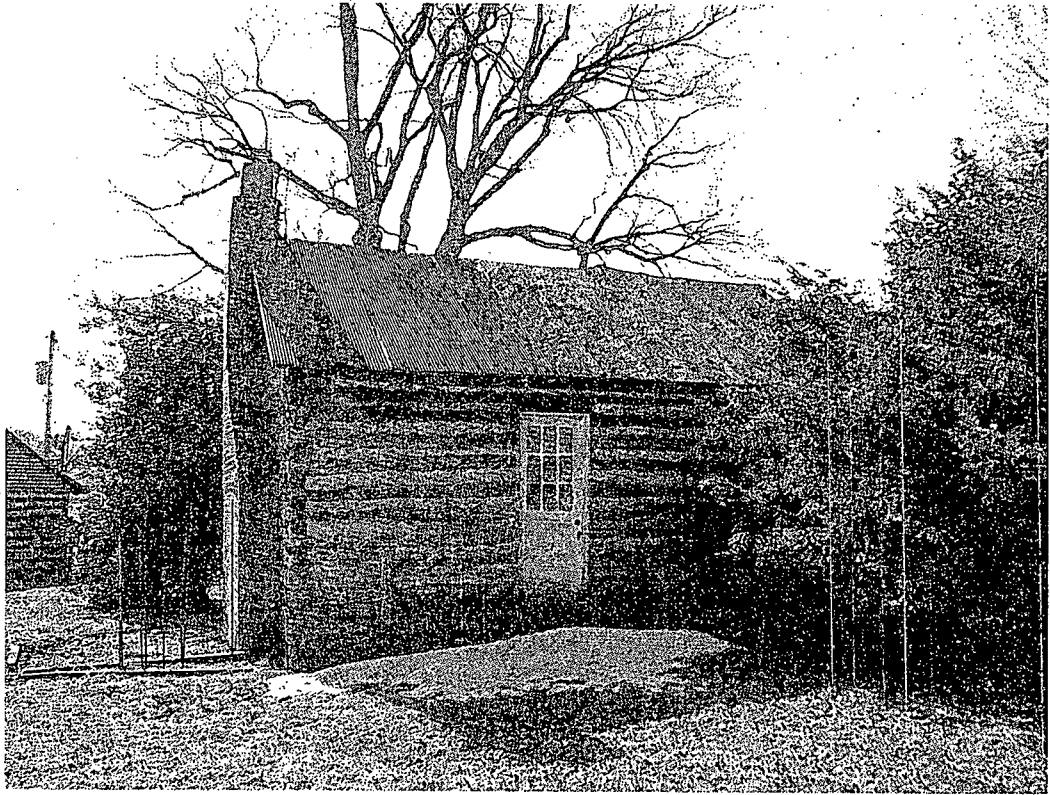
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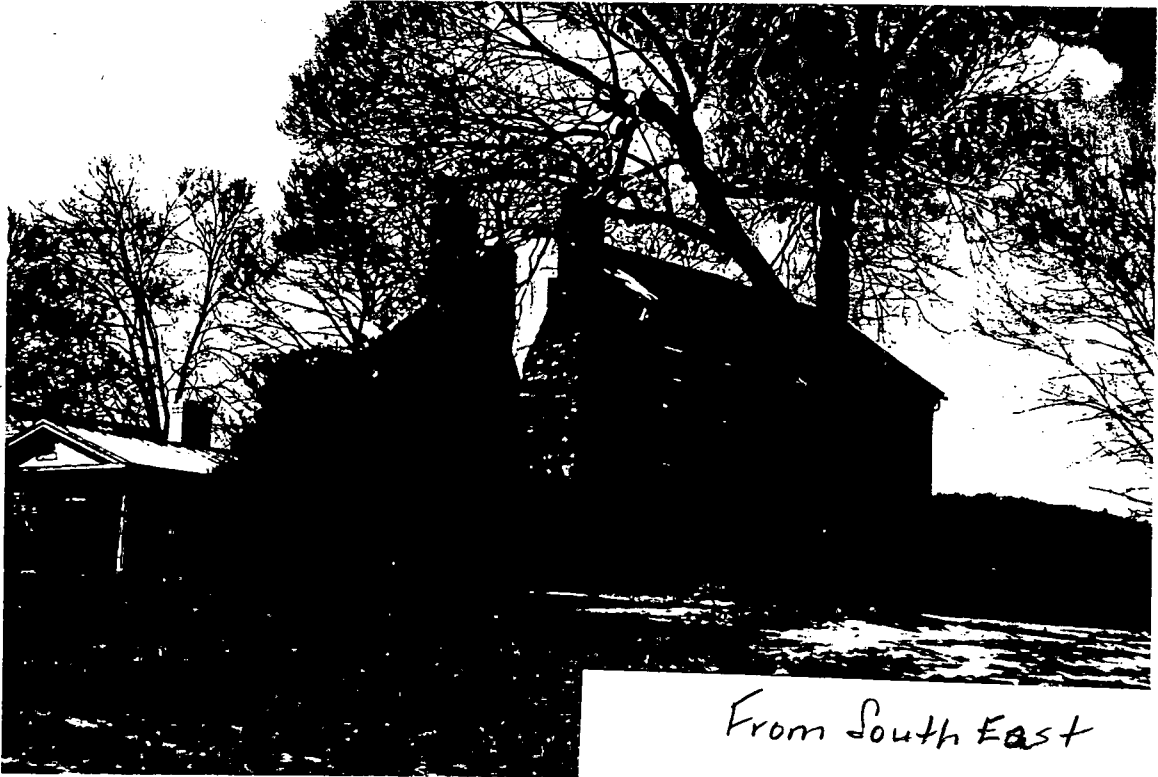


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From South East

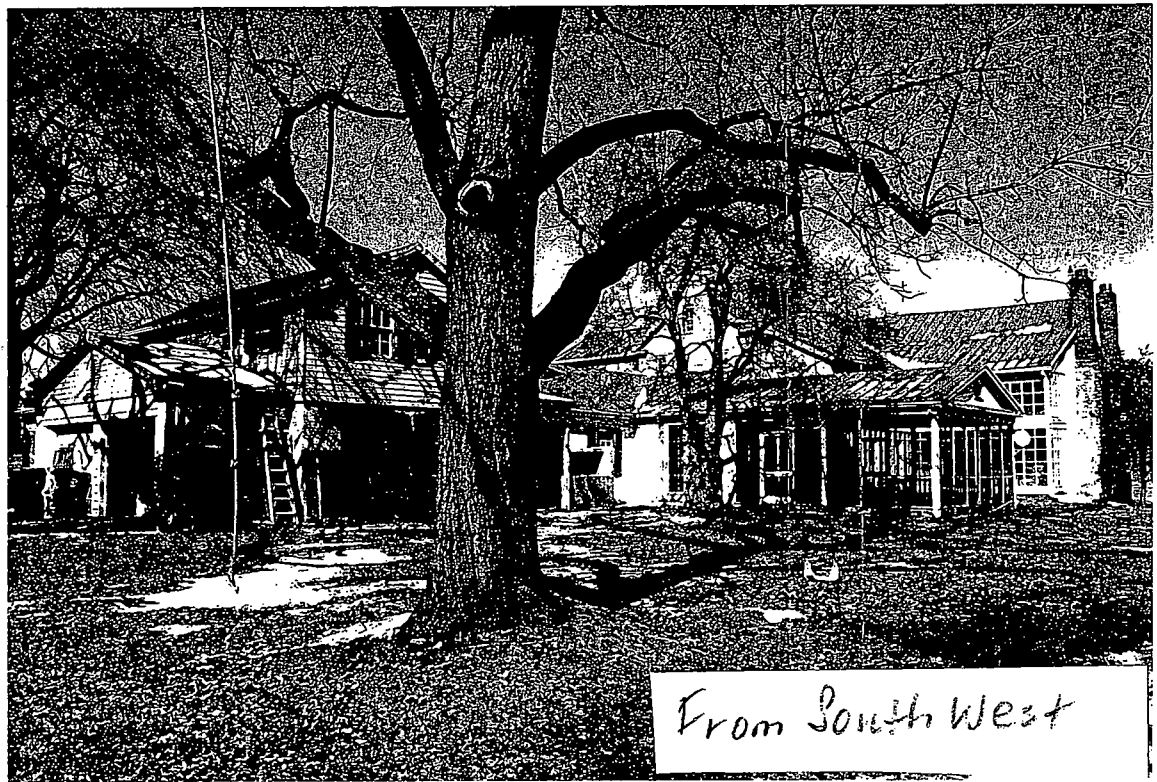


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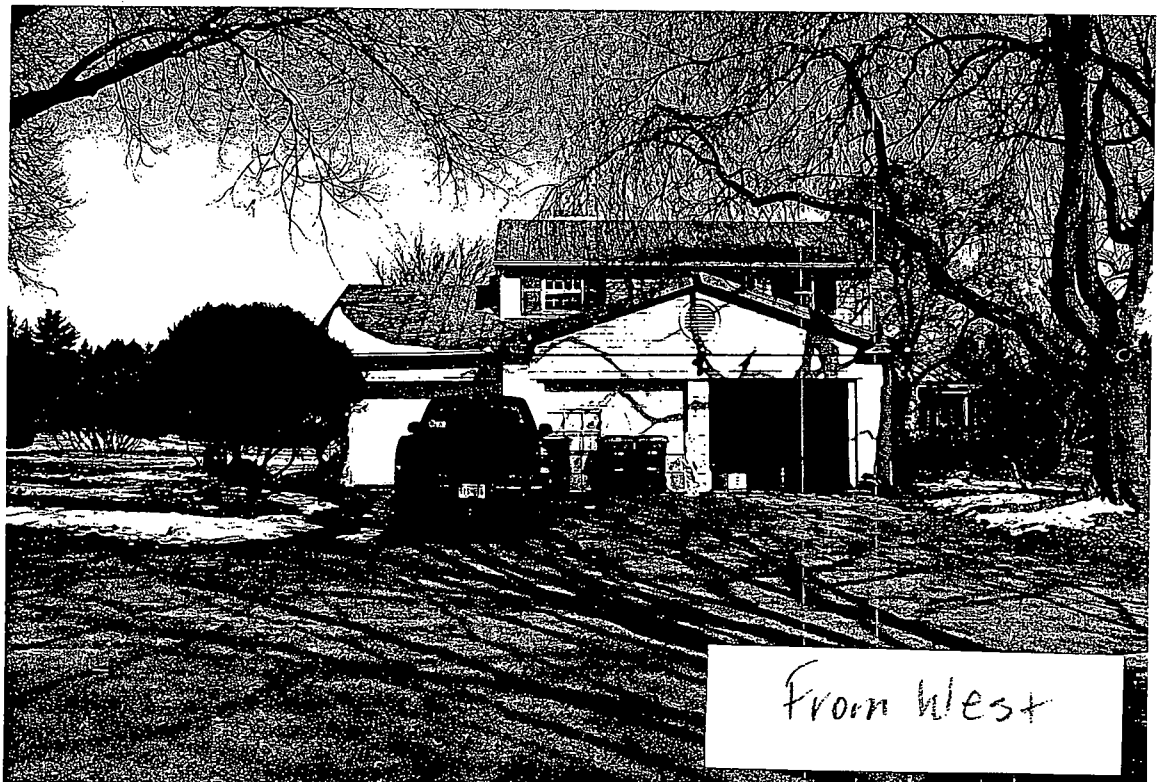
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From South West



From West

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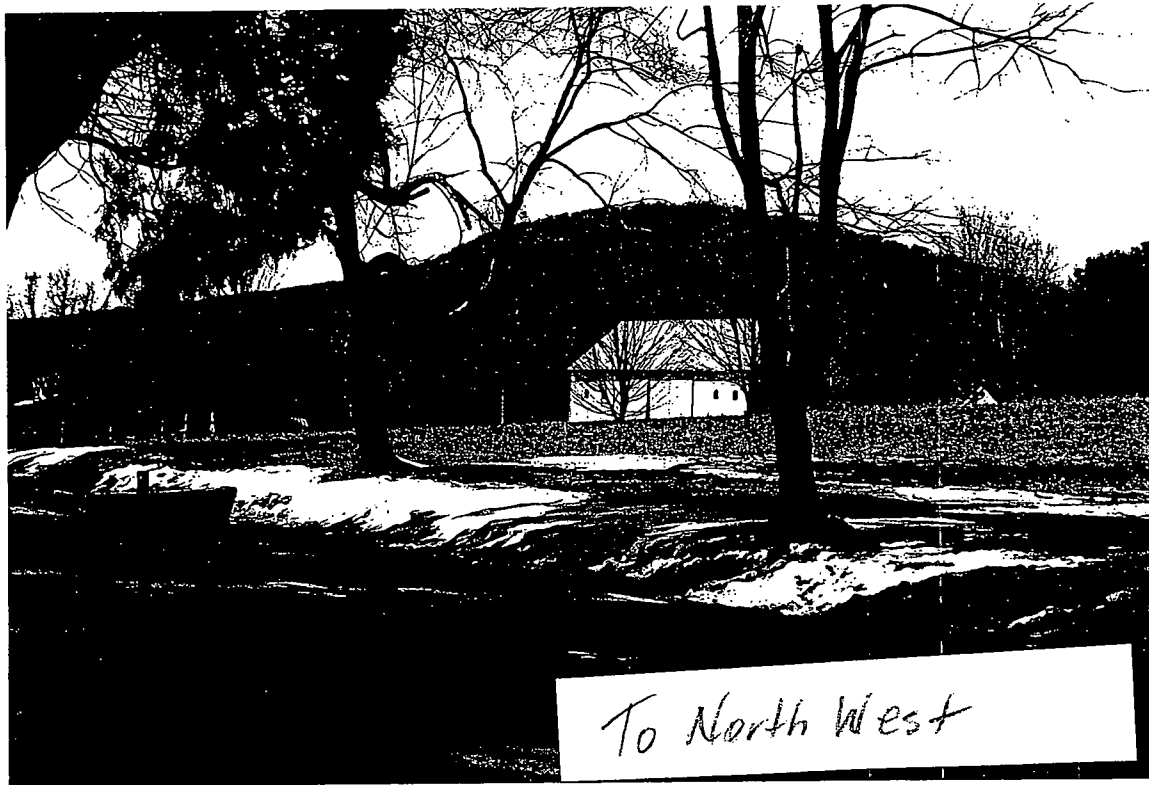


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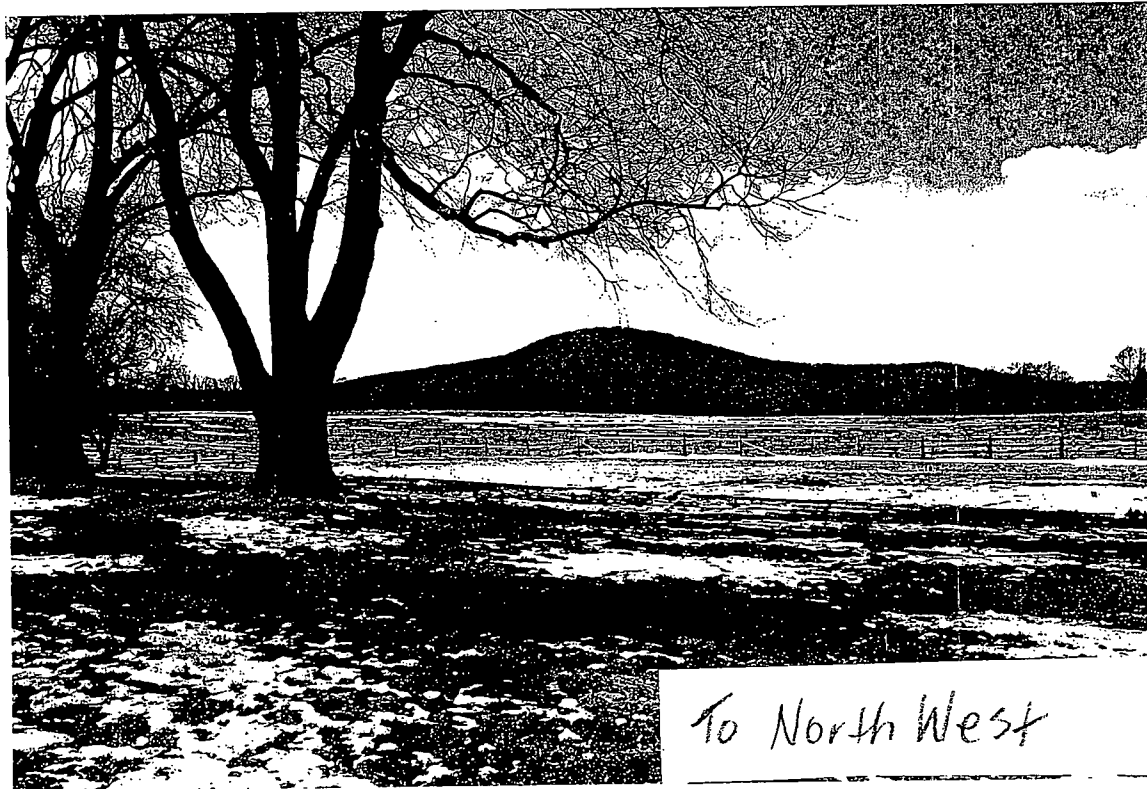


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To North West



To North West

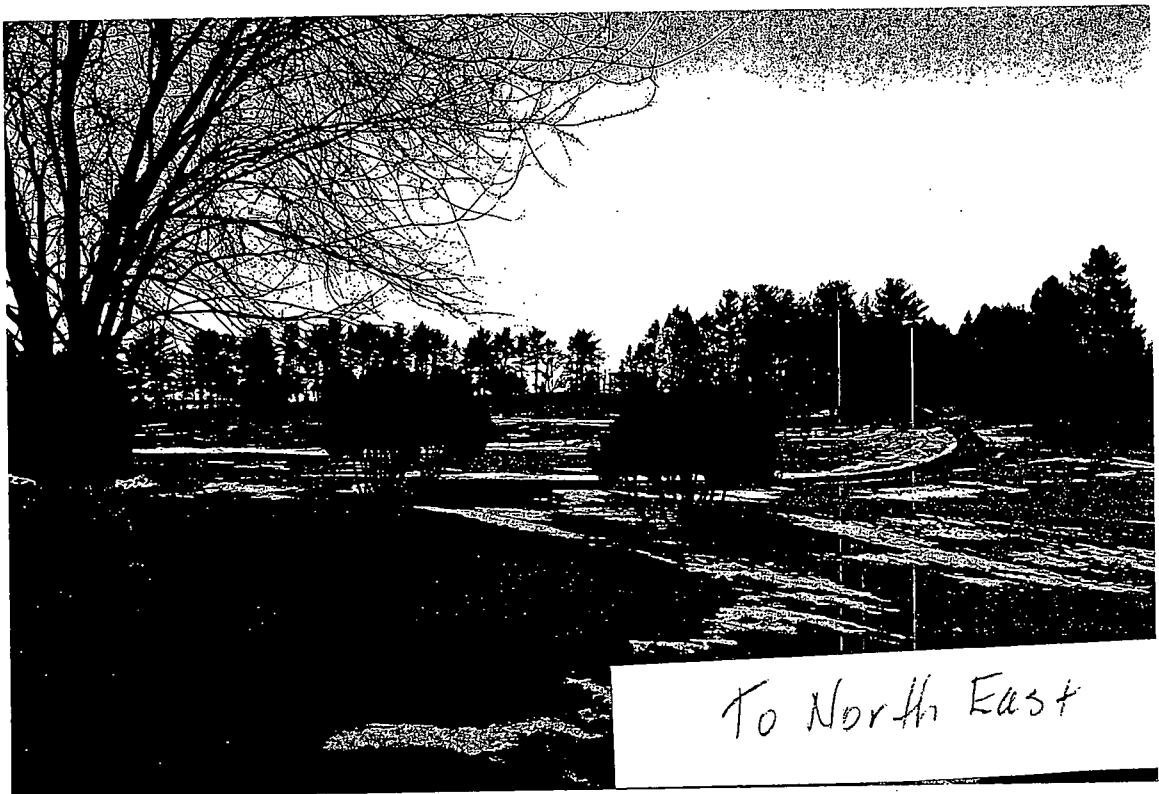
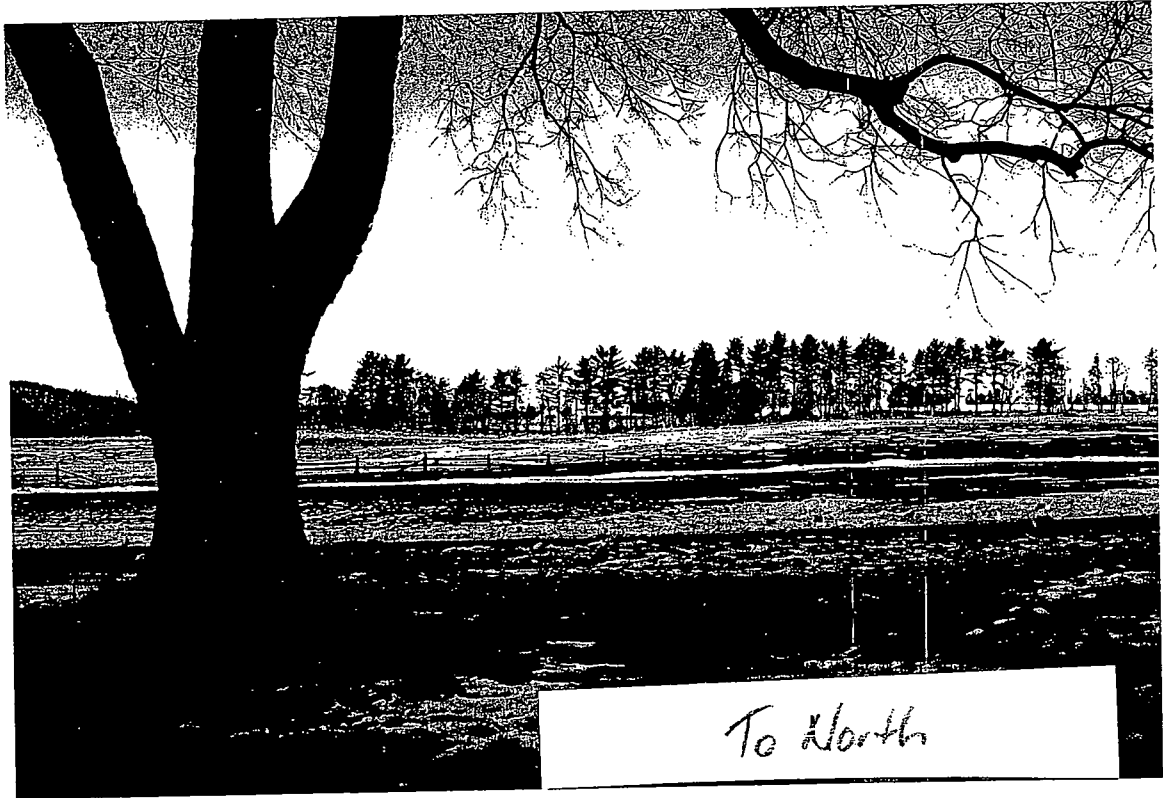


To North from Driveway

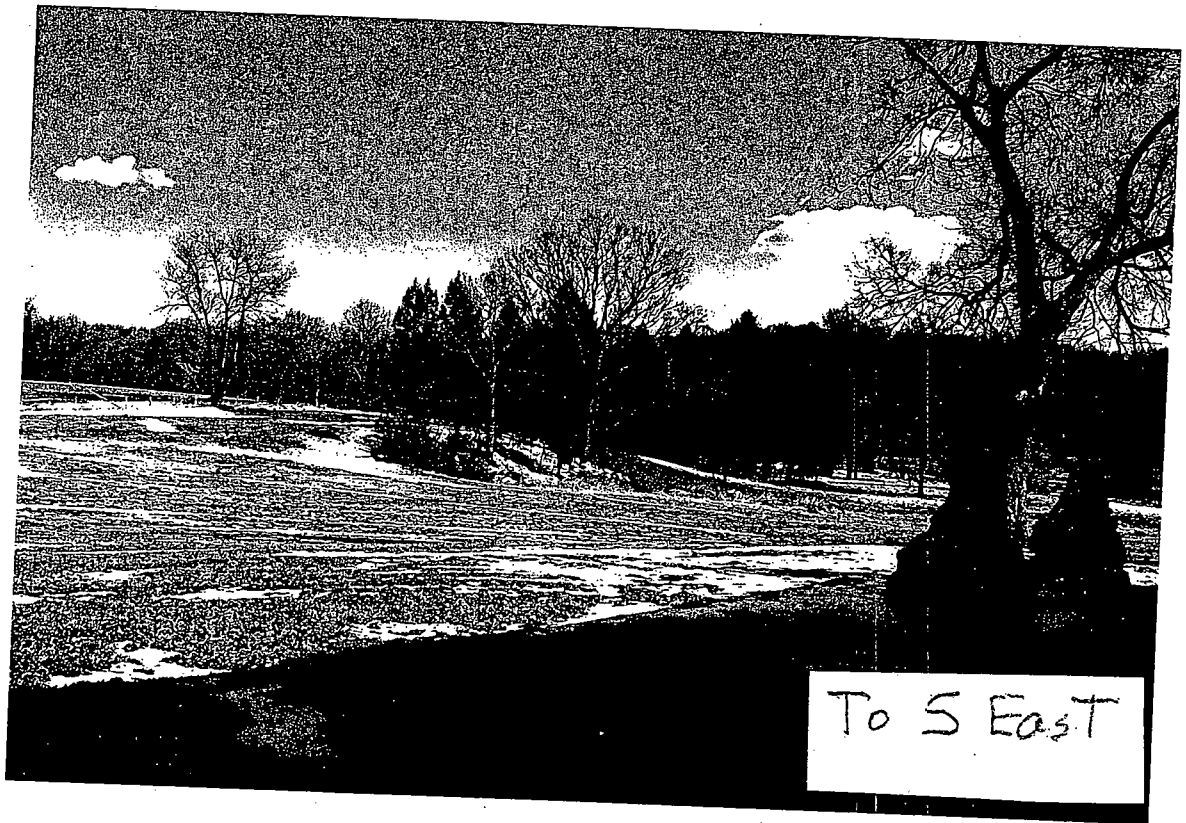
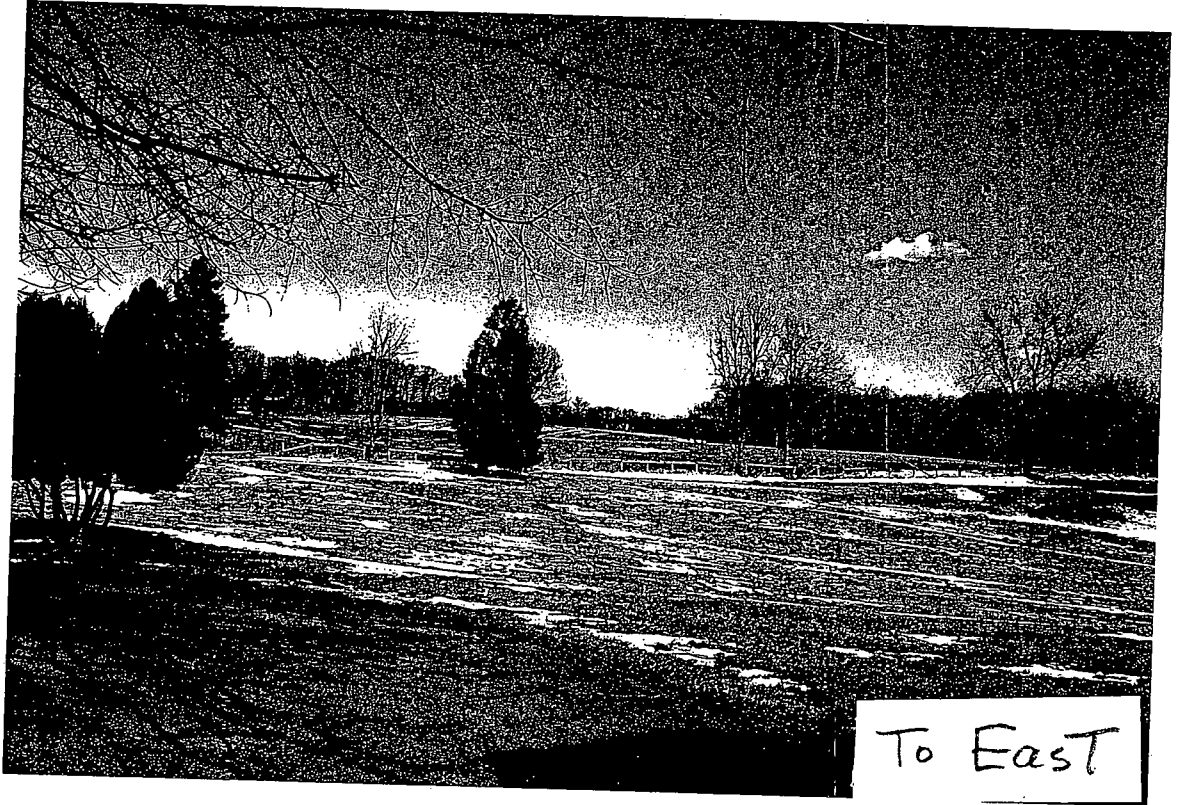


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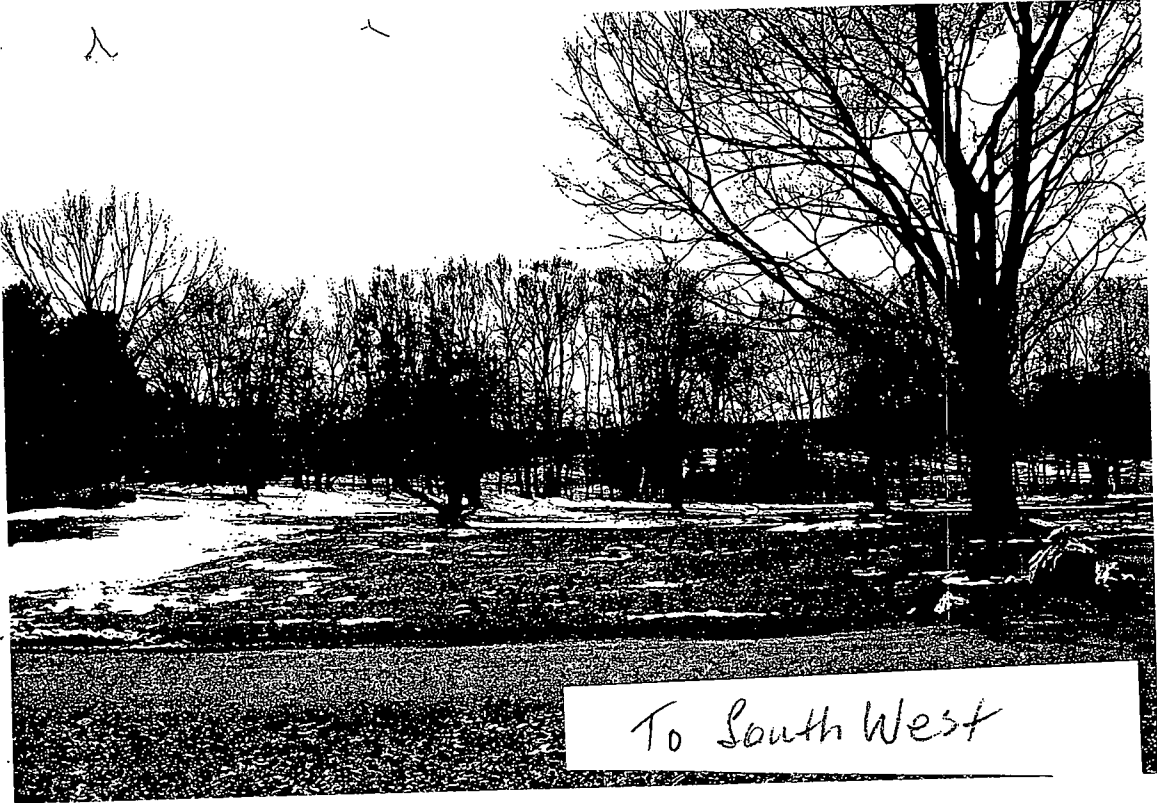
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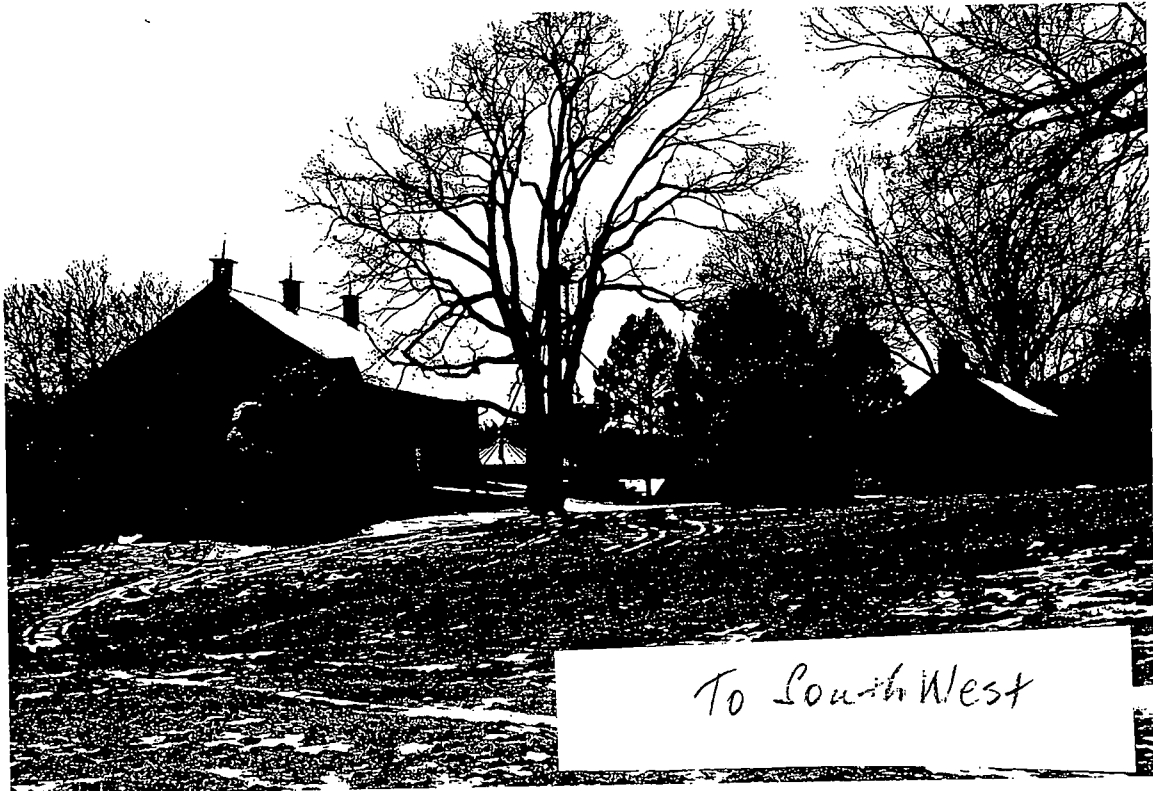


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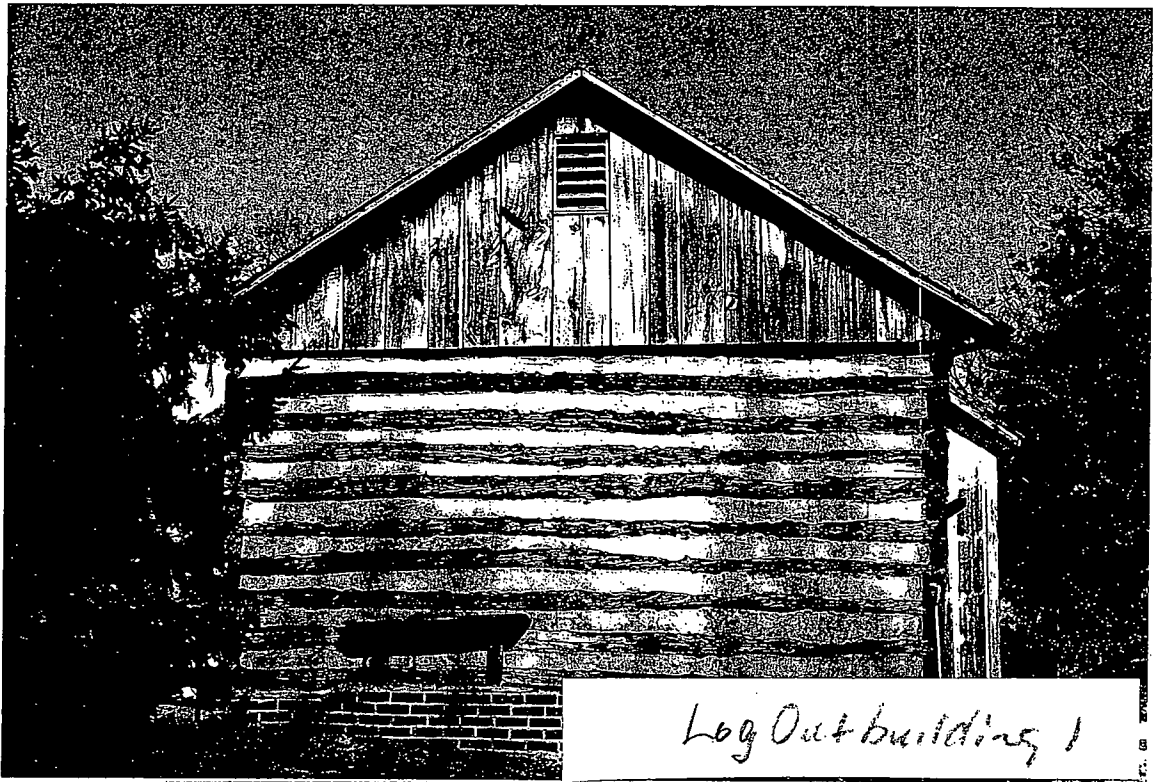


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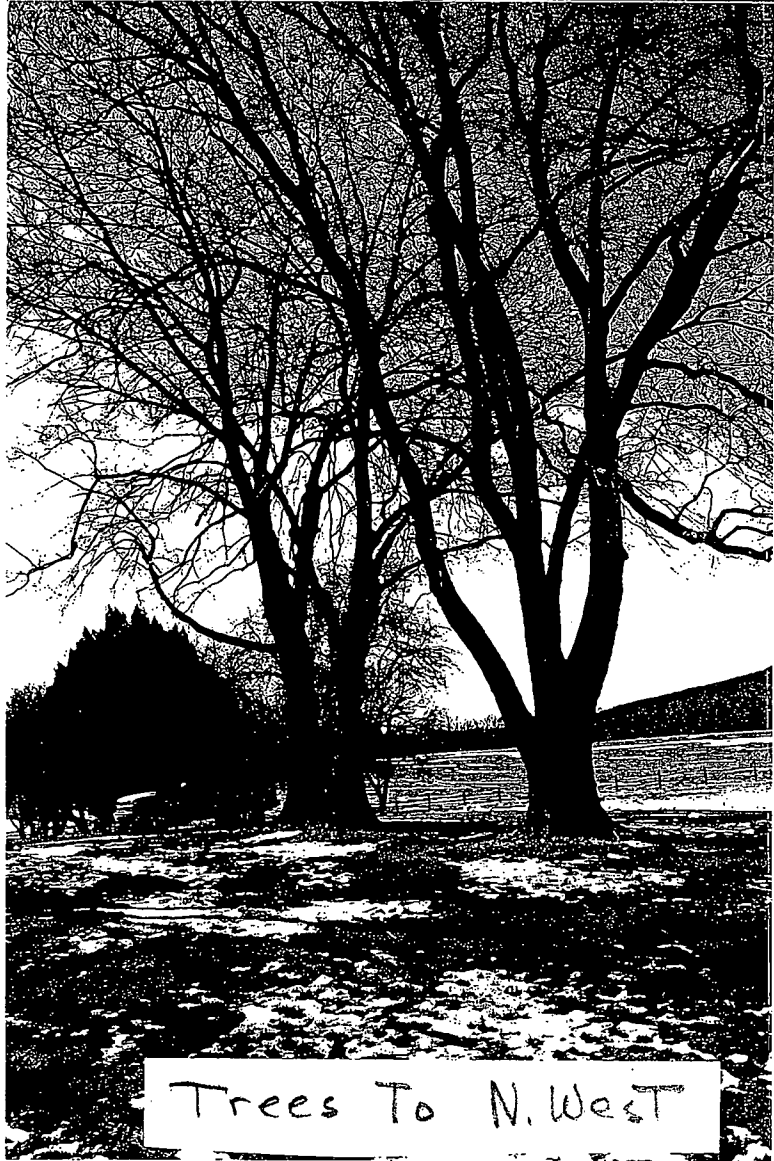


TO WEST

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Log Out building 1



Trees To N. West

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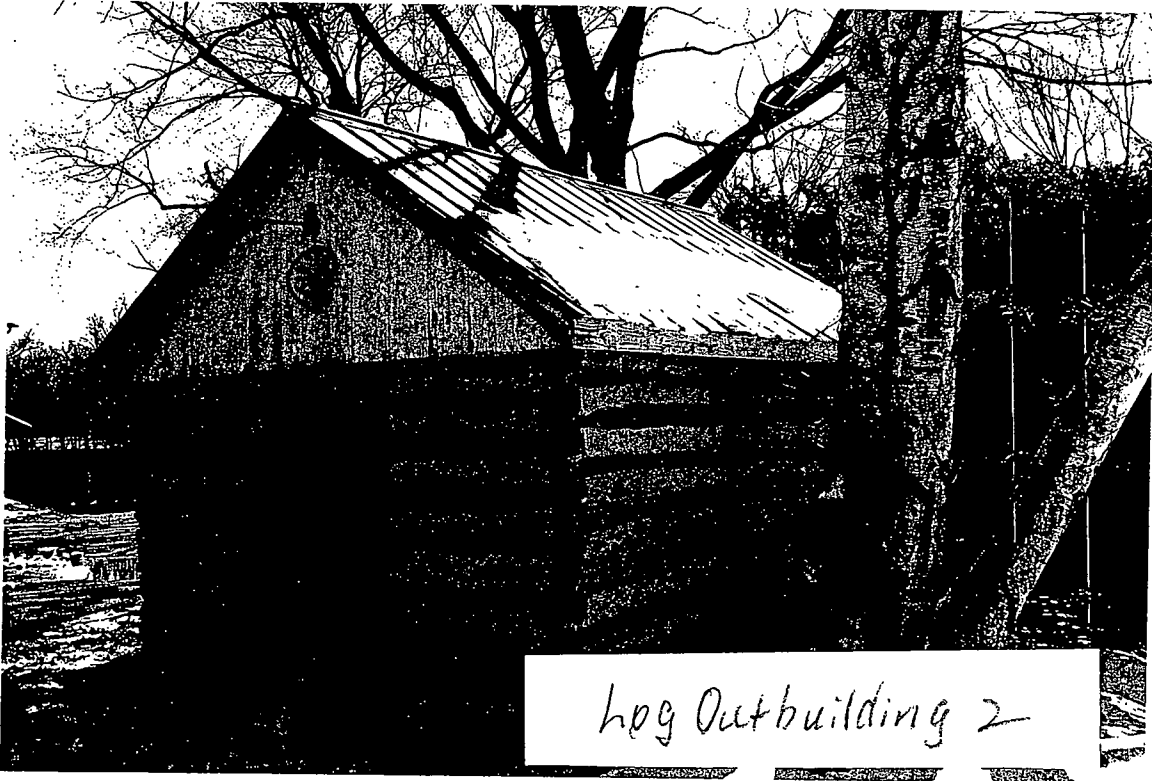
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Barn

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*William D. & Claudia F. Pleasants, Jr.*  
*24012 Frederick Road*  
*Clarksburg, Maryland 20871*

March 21, 2007

Ms. Anne Fothergill  
*Historic Preservation Planner*  
The Maryland-National Capital  
Park & Planning Commission  
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: 17700 Comus Road, Dickerson, Maryland

Dear Ms. Fothergill:

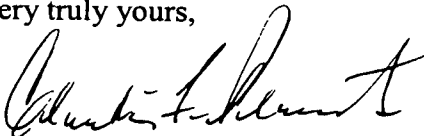
It was a pleasure meeting with you the other day at our property located on Comus Road. We appreciated your help in determining the necessary requirements and preparation that may be needed in order to move forward on our project.

With regard to the above-referenced address, enclosed is the information that is necessary to complete the Application for Historic Area Work Permit:

- 1) Application for Historic Area Work Permit
- 2) Written Description of Project both (a) & (b) – under separate cover
- 3) Site Plan
- 4) Plans and Elevations for existing structure and proposed changes
- 5) Materials Specifications – see 1.b.
- 6) Photographs
- 7) Tree Survey – shown on site plan
- 8) Addresses of Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners (listed under separate cover)
- 9) Boundary Survey Drawing, May 2002

We look forward to attending the Historic Preservation Commission meeting scheduled for April 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m., in Silver Springs. If you should have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (301) 428-0800.

Very truly yours,



Claudia F. Pleasants

Enclosures



RETURN TO: DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES  
255 ROCKVILLE PIKE, 2ND FLOOR, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850  
240/771-5370

DPS - #8

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
301/563-3400

# APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Person: Don Pleasants  
Daytime Phone No.: (301) 428-0800

Tax Account No.: 11-00915444

Name of Property Owner: William D. and Claudia Pleasants, Jr. Daytime Phone No.: (301) 428-0800

Address: 24012 Frederick Road, Clarksburg, MD 20871  
Street Number City State Zip Code

Contractor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Contractor Registration No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent for Owners: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE**

House Number: 17700 Street: Comus Road  
Town/City: Dickerson Nearest Cross Street: Route 109  
Lot: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision: \_\_\_\_\_  
Liber: \_\_\_\_\_ Folio: \_\_\_\_\_ Parcel: 223.41 acres

**PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE**

- 1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:
- |   |  |  |  |                                       |  |  |                               |                               |
|---|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Construct | <input type="checkbox"/> Extend            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alter/Renovate | <input type="checkbox"/> AAC                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Slab         | <input type="checkbox"/> Room Addition     | <input type="checkbox"/> Porch         | <input type="checkbox"/> Deck | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Move                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Install           | <input type="checkbox"/> Wreck/Raze                | <input type="checkbox"/> Solar                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Fireplace    | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodburning Stove | <input type="checkbox"/> Single Family |                               |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Revision             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Revocable                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |  |  |                               |                               |
- 1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ undetermined
- 1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit # \_\_\_\_\_

**PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS**

- 2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01  WSSC 02  Septic 03  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2B. Type of water supply: 01  WSSC 02  Well 03  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL**

- 3A. Height: \_\_\_\_\_ feet \_\_\_\_\_ inches
- 3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:
- On party line/property line  Entirely on land of owner  On public right of way/easement

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Signature of owner or authorized agent

3/21/07  
Date

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission  
Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Application/Permit No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Filed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Issued: \_\_\_\_\_

William D. Pleasants, Jr. and Claudia F. Pleasants  
24012 Frederick Rd., Clarksburg, MD 20871

Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission  
Application for Historic Area Work Permit  
17700 Comus Road, Dickerson, MD 20842

Preliminary Hearing  
April 11, 2007

**1. Written Description of Project**

**a. Description of existing structure and environmental setting, including their historical features and significance.**

The 6 acre historic site has a two story residence with 7 bedrooms. The first four rooms in the two story southern section were built in approximately 1860. Subsequent additions occurred in approximately the 1920's and 1960's. There are three log outbuildings on the site, and a stone foundation bank barn. The residence is surrounded by mature trees on the west, with a view of Sugarloaf Mountain across the front pastures. The views to the east are of pastures, and to the north of subdivision homes and farms. The parcel is approximately 223 acres, fronting on Comus Road, approximately 1 ½ miles west of the intersection of Rt. 109, where the Comus Inn is located.

James Pearee, a local farmer, built the property. The property stayed in the Pearee family until 1948. The Farr family purchased it in 1968, from whose estate the current owners purchased it in 2000. Over the years many changes and additions were made to the original structure, which consisted of 2 rooms on the first floor, and 2 on the second, with twin external fireplaces with stone bases and brick chimneys. The original foundation is of stone, with a dirt floor. Subsequent additions contain porches, kitchen, garages, additional living space, and a metal roof. The exterior was covered by the Farr family with stucco.

**b. General description of project and its effect on the historic resource, the environmental setting, and the historic district.**

The proposed changes to the residence add a two story wing, and renovate the remaining footprint of the existing structure. The addition is of stone, board, and metal roof, to reflect the character of the original structure and the native building materials. The intent is to disturb the existing mature trees as little as possible, while allowing the internal flow of the rooms to reflect modern living. The owners intend to restore the log outbuildings and barn as part of the whole project if the residential renovations and addition are allowed. If they should not be allowed, then the owners may continue to rent the residence, but not restore the outbuildings.

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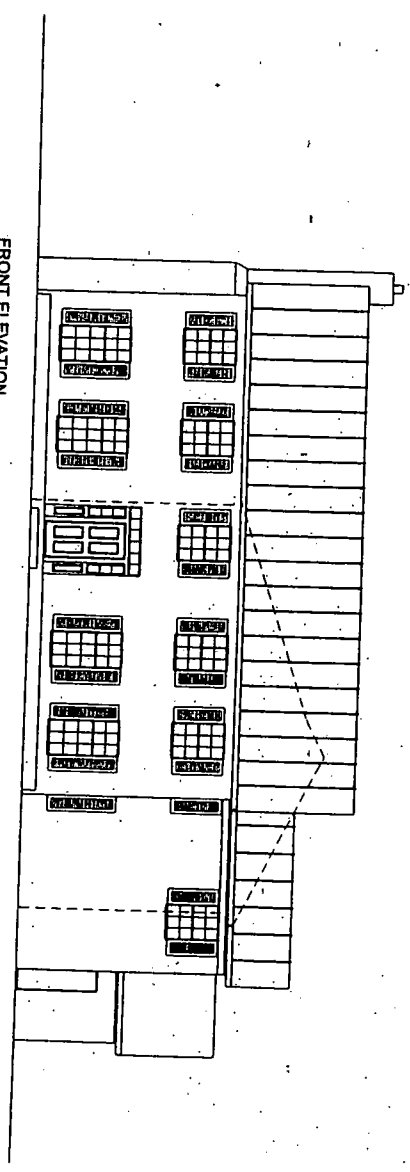
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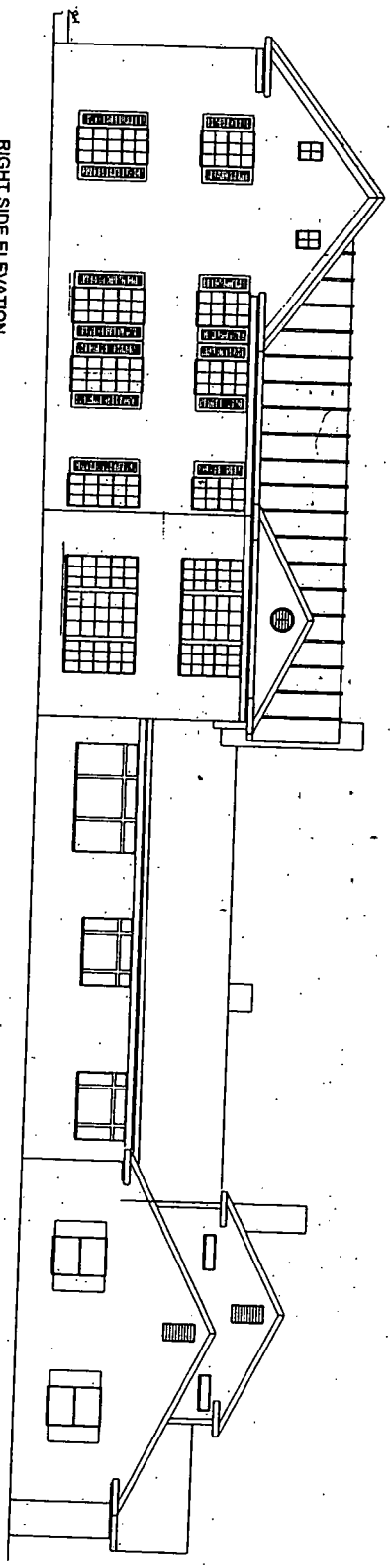


Existing Structure

FRONT ELEVATION

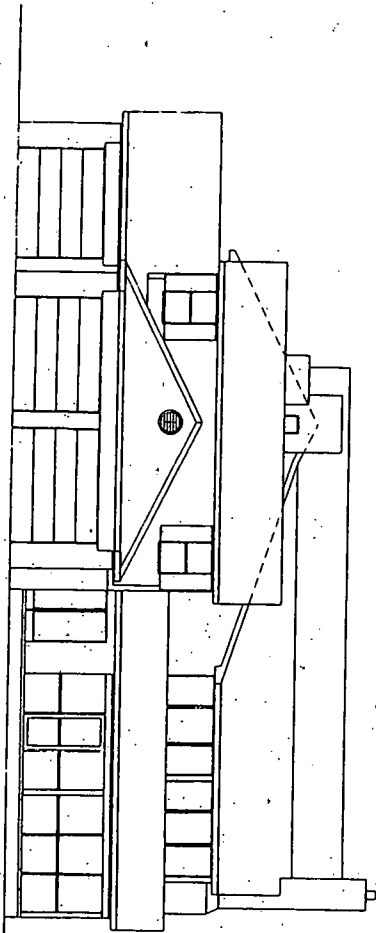


RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION

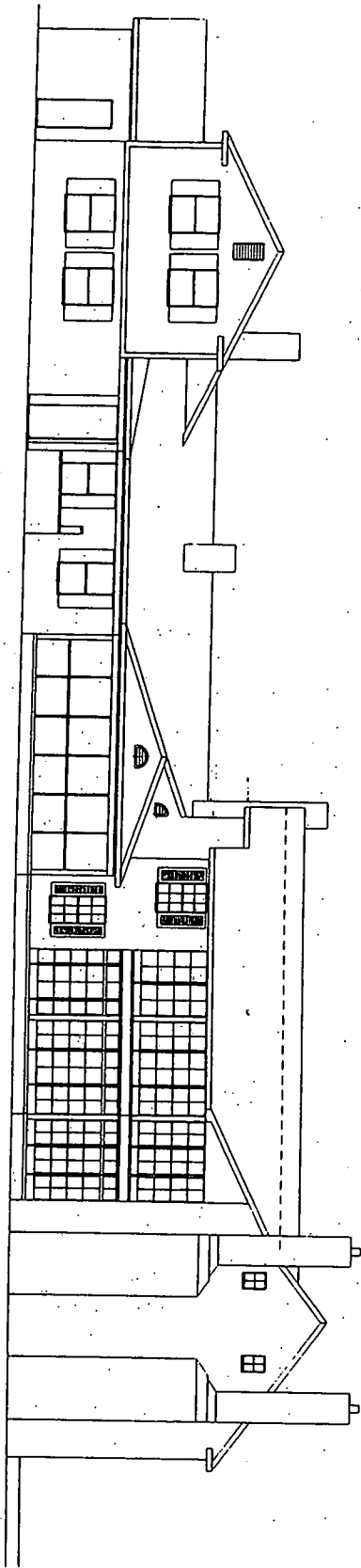


FROM  
W/DRY  
4/55

# Existing Structure

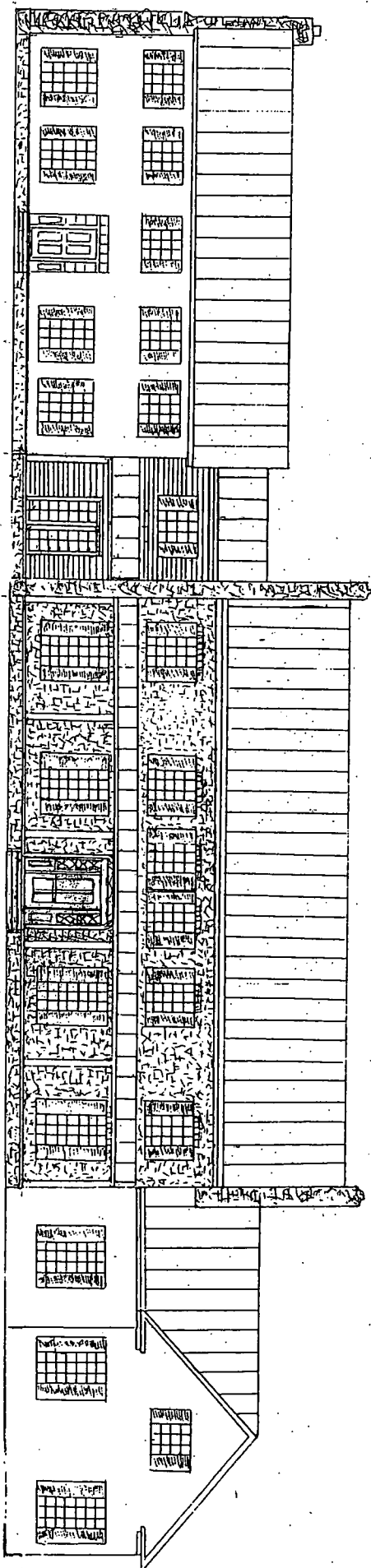


REAR ELEVATION

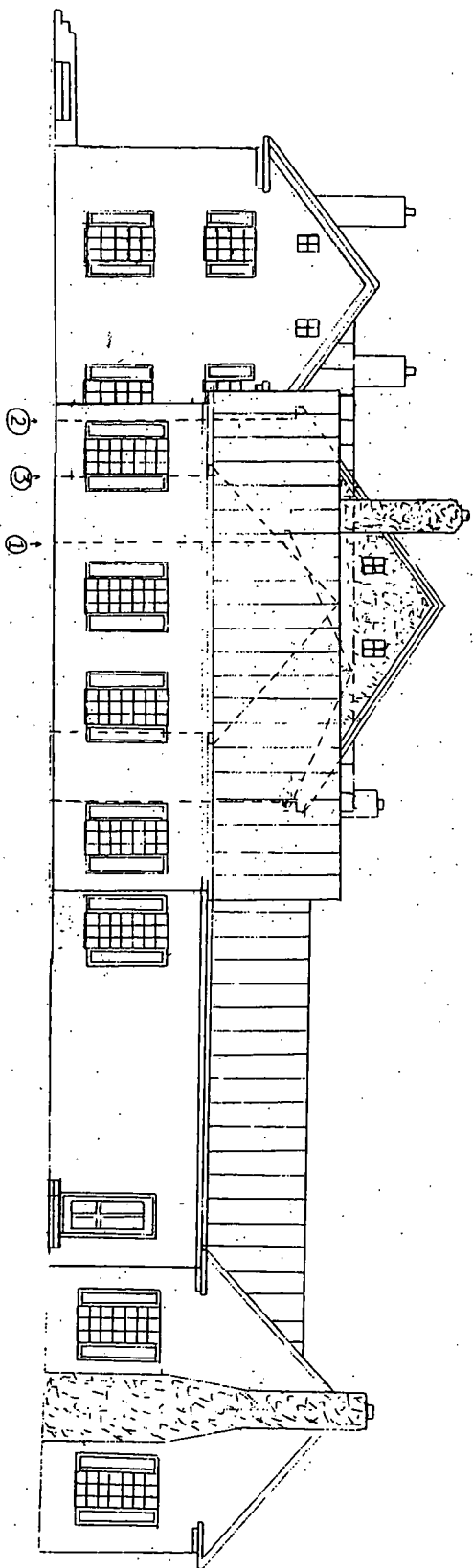


LEFT SIDE ELEVATION

Proposed Changes

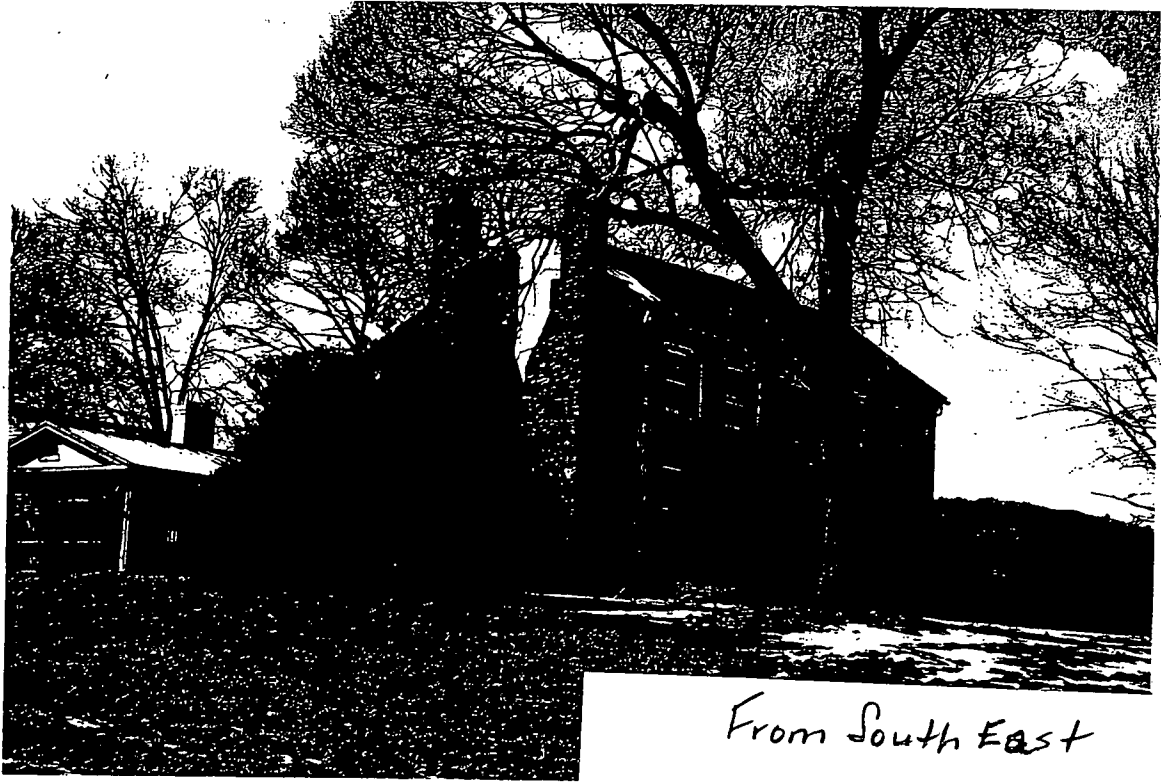


EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

PLEASANTS PROPERTY

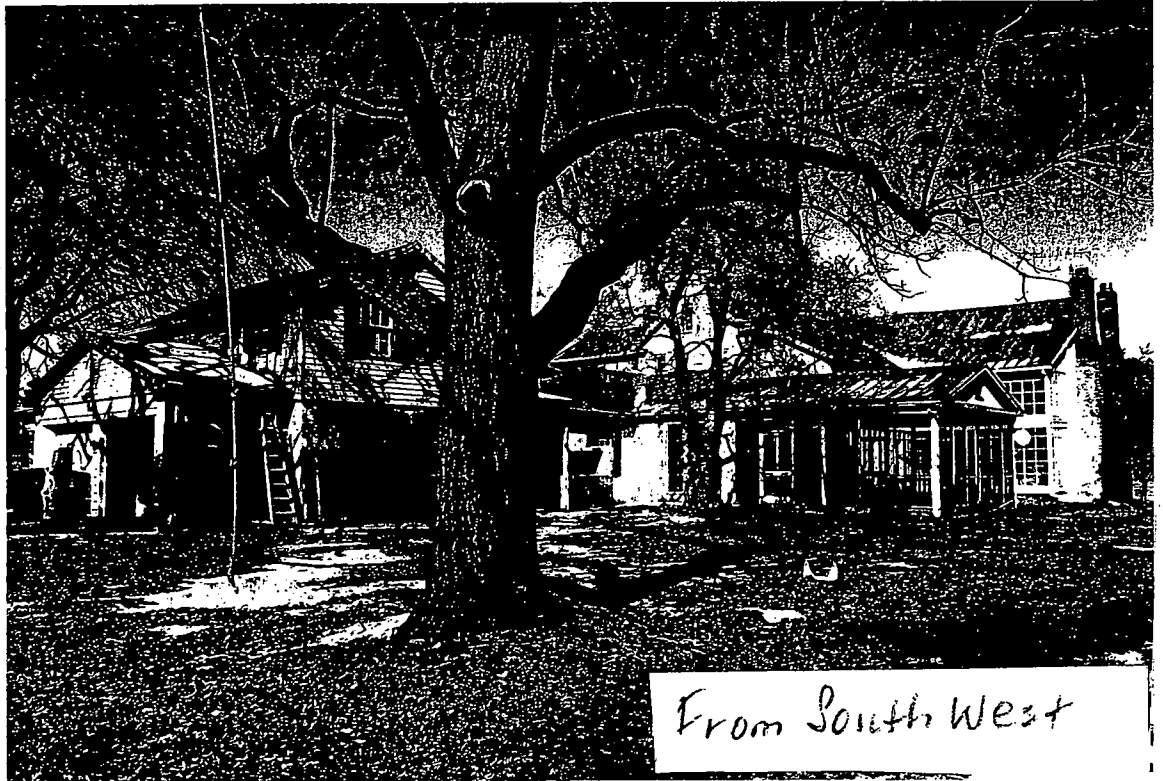


*From South East*

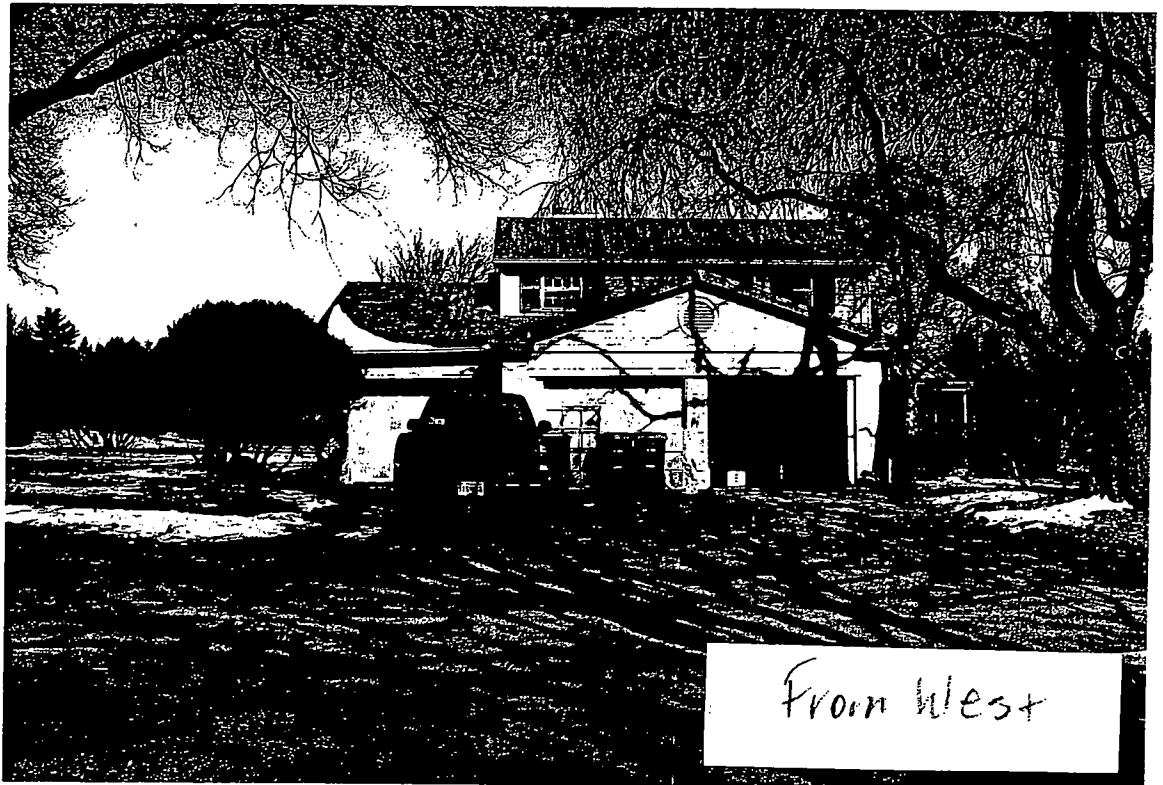


*From South*





From South West



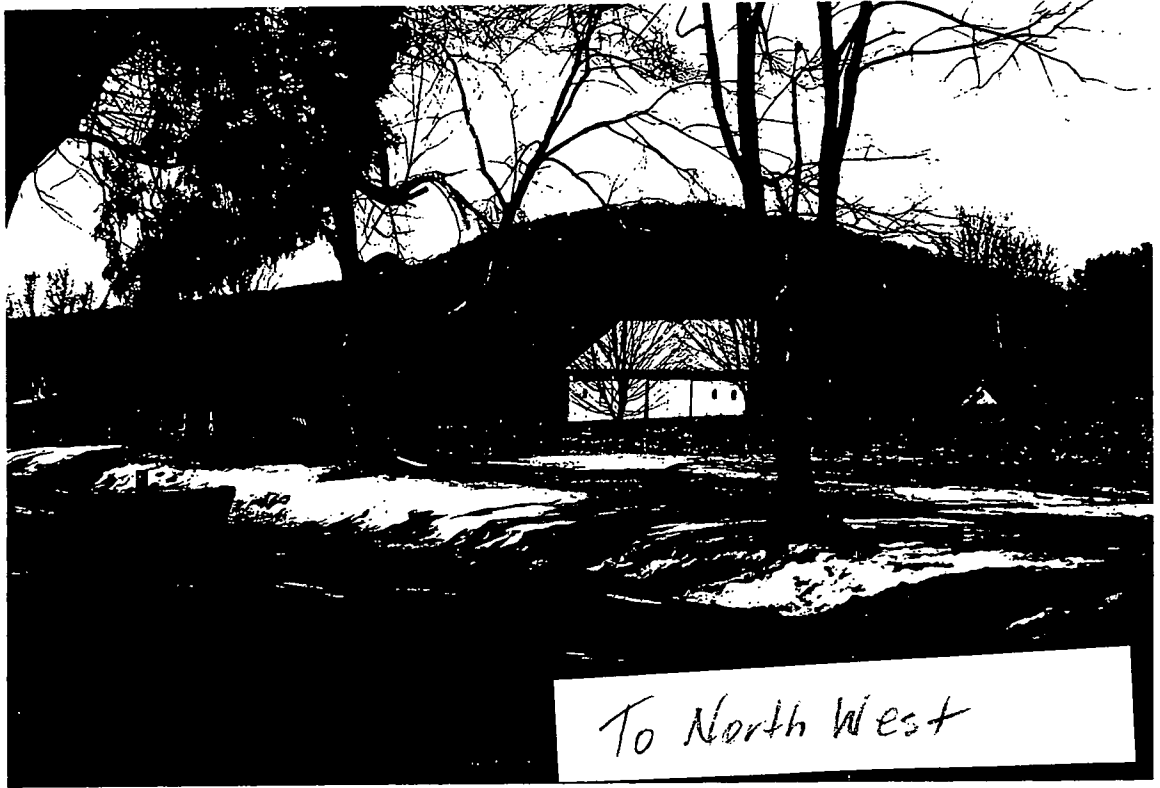
From West



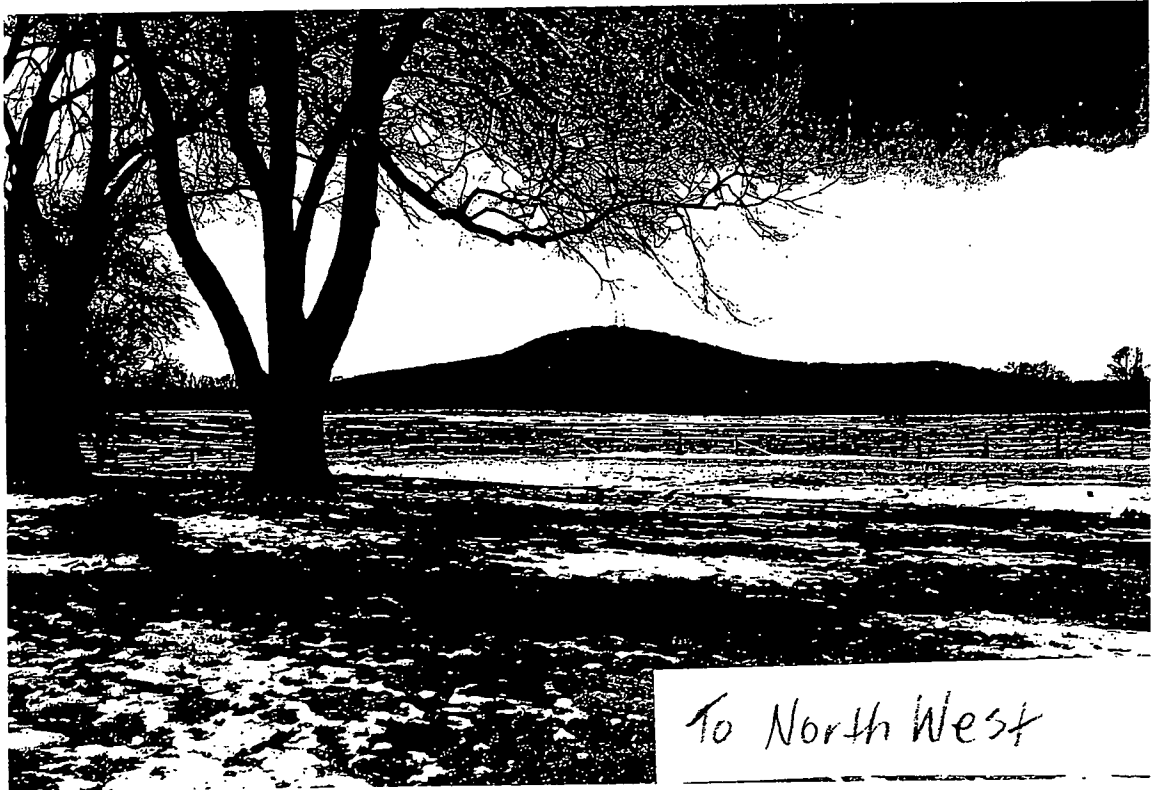
From N.W



From North



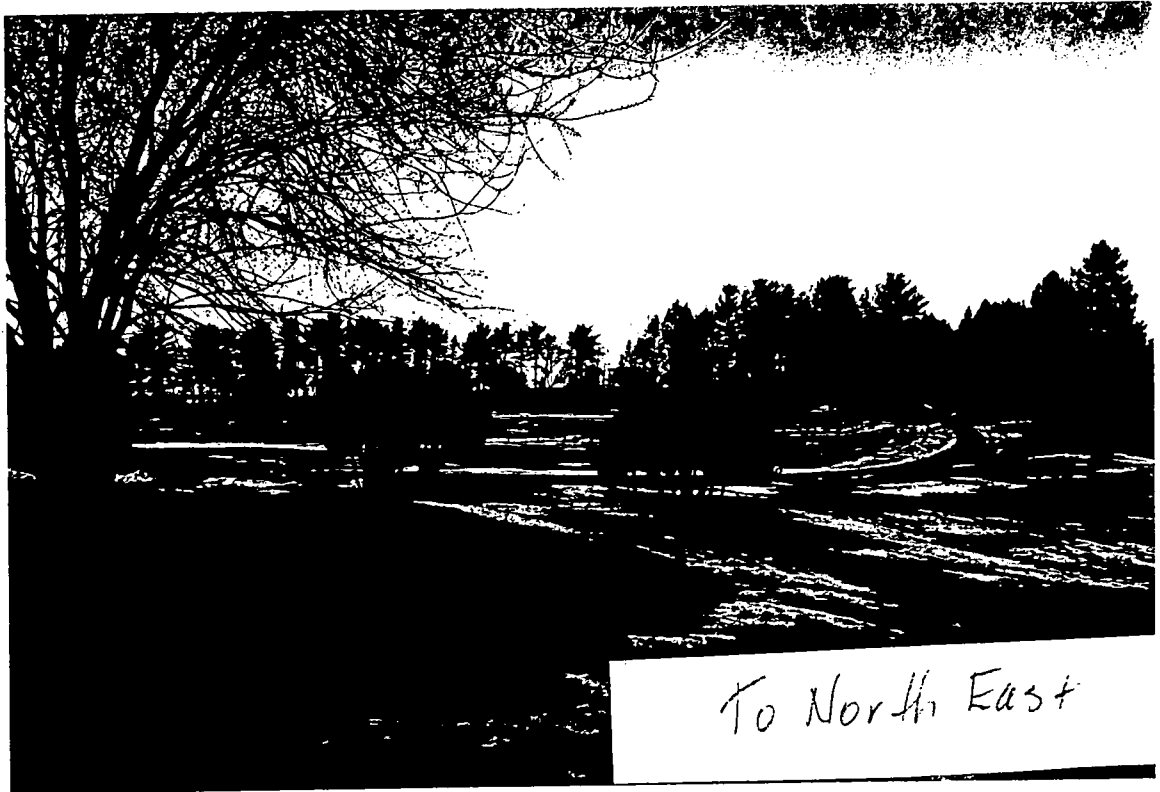
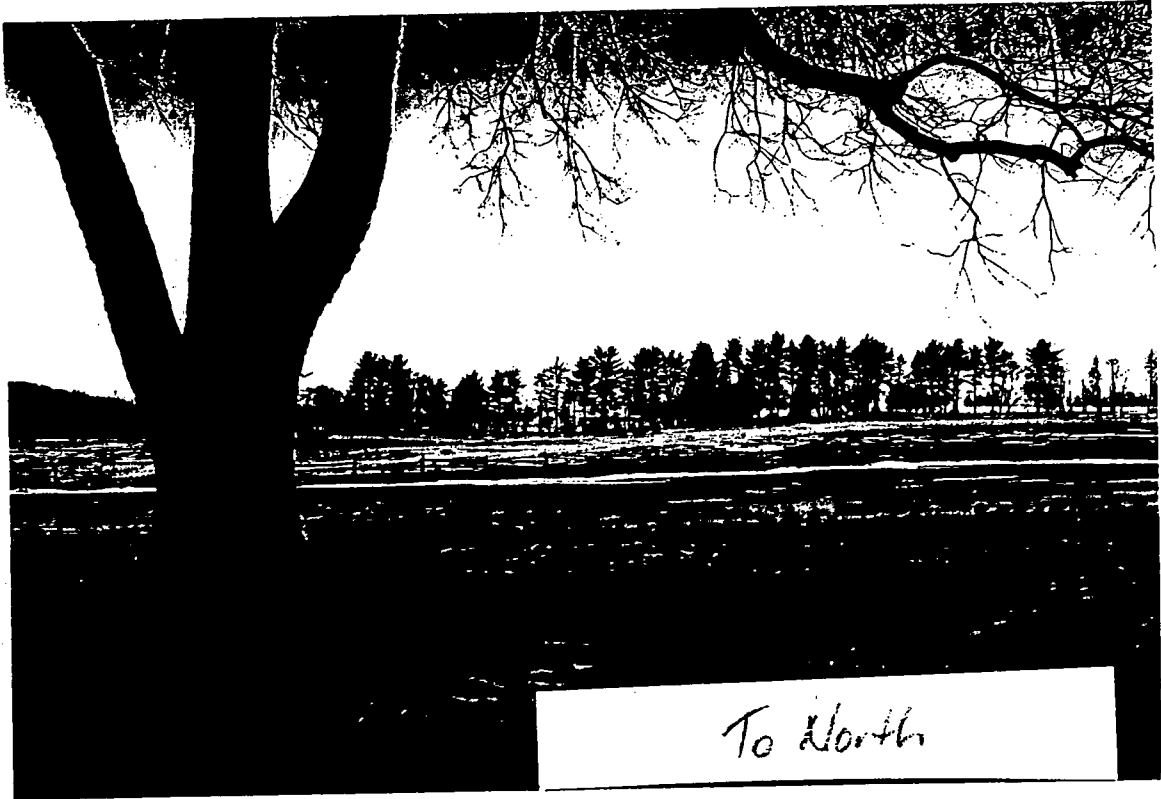
To North West



To North West









To East



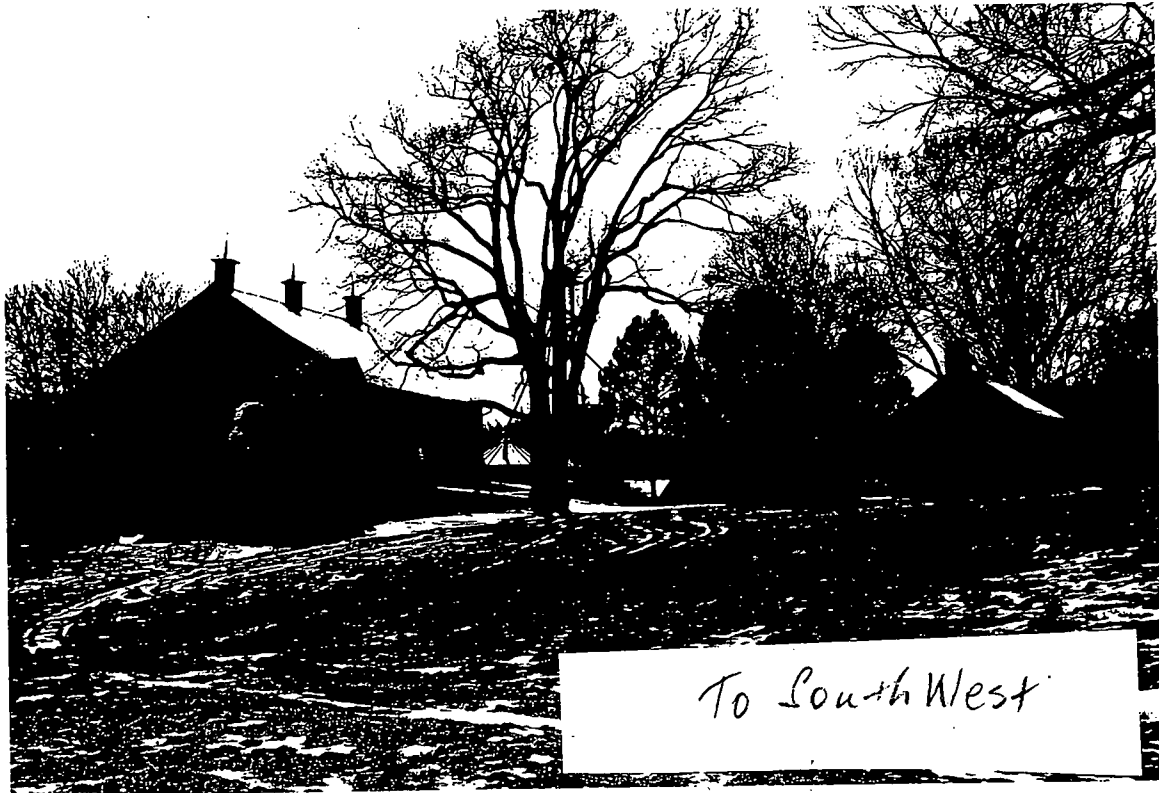
To S East

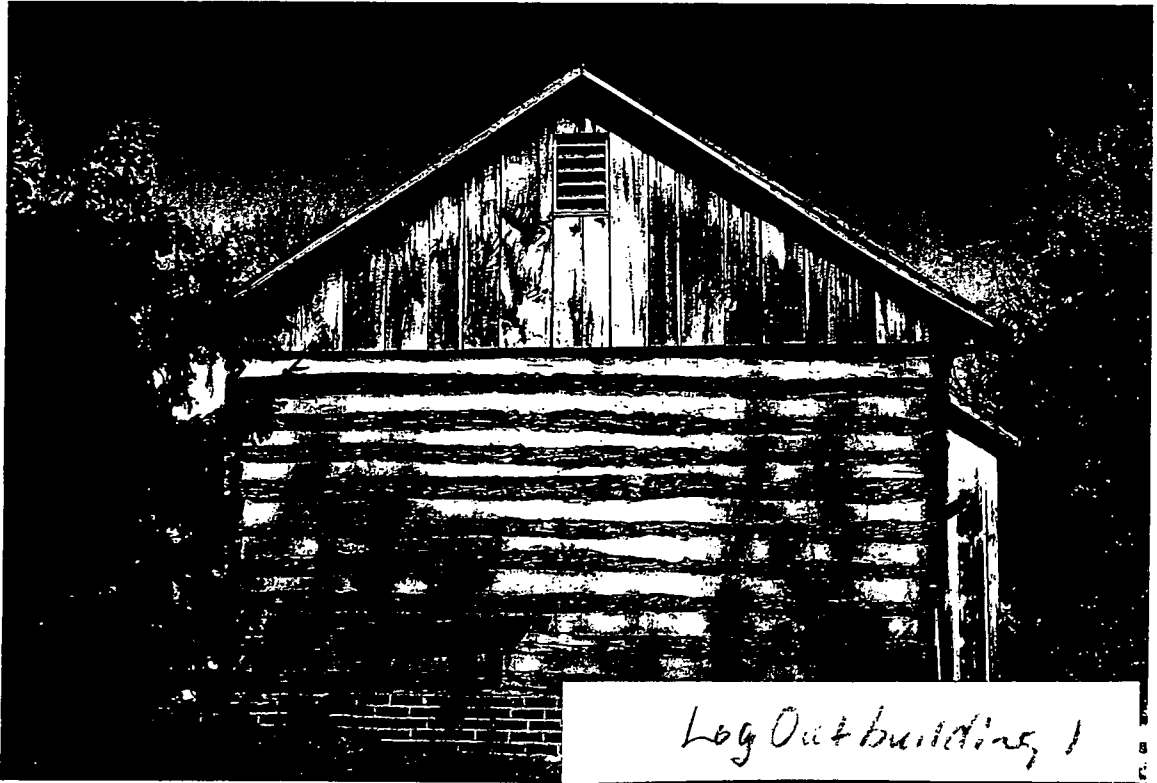


To South West



To South





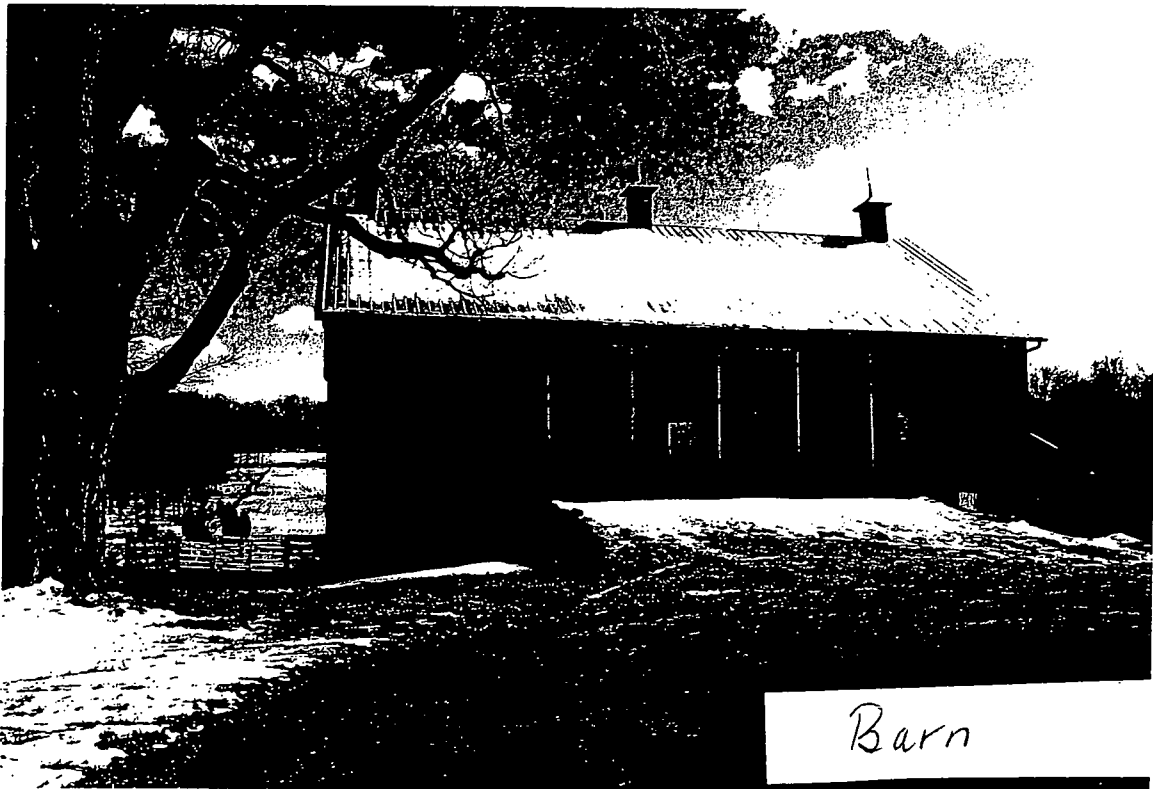
Log Out building, 1



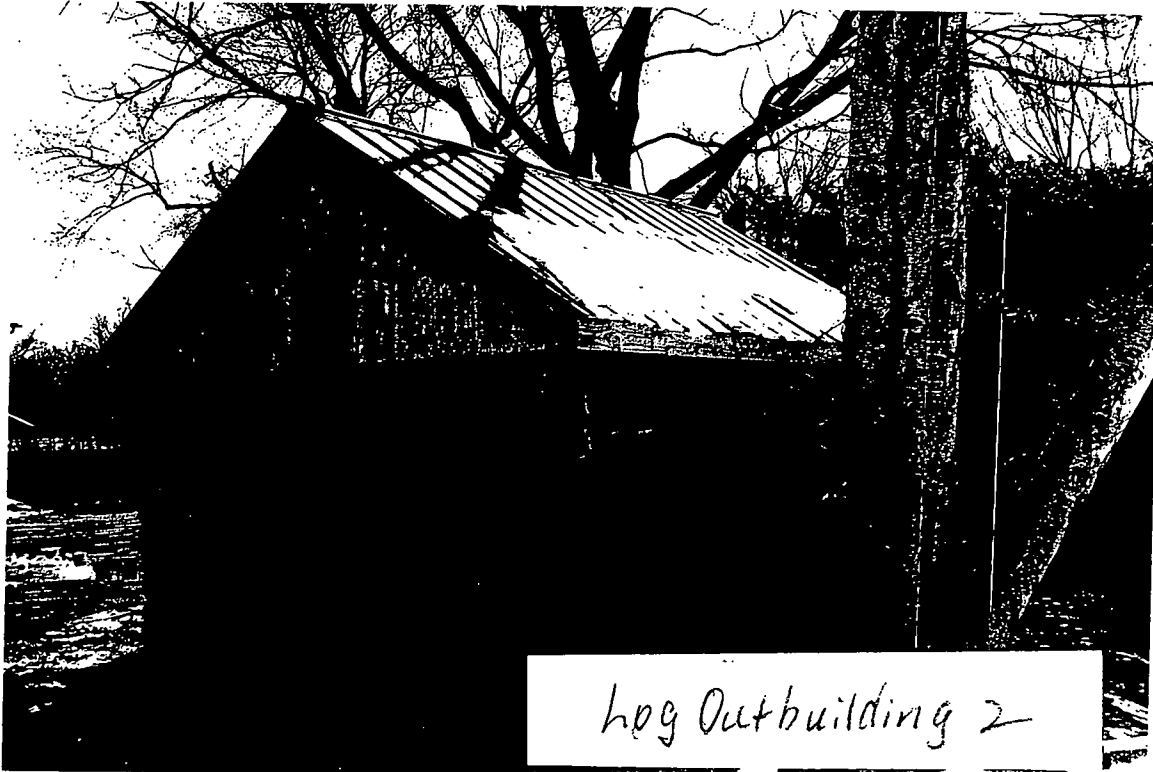
Trees To N. West



Log Out building 3



Barn



log Outbuilding 2



**William D. and Claudia Pleasants**  
**Adjacent and Cross Street Property Owners**  
**Subject Property: 11-00915444, 1740 Comus Road**

**No. 1**

Account Number: 11-03154781  
Owner Name: Robert K. Jackson  
Premise/Mailing Address: 18100 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 2**

**Account Number: 11-00915466**  
Owner Name: William D. Jr. & Claudia Pleasants  
Premise Address: 22610 Old Hundred Road  
Barnesville, Maryland 20838  
Mailing Address: 24012 Frederick Road  
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871

**No. 3**

Account Number: 11-00913695  
Owner Name: Norma Checkley, et al  
Premise Address: 17100 Comus Road  
Mailing Address: 17110 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 4**

Account Number: 11-02150207  
Owner Name: Laurence M. Frazier  
Premise/Mailing Address: 23901 Barley Field Lane  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 5**

Account Number: 11-02150093  
Owner Name: Robert Lee Payne  
Premise/Mailing Address: 23900 Barley Field Lane  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 6**

Account Number: 11-03310987  
Owner Name: Gunter E & PG Geisecke  
Premise/Mailing Address: 17701 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 7**

Account Number: 11-02516073  
Owner Name: Thomas F. Sarelas, et al  
Premise/Mailing Address: 17705 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 8**

Account Number: 11-02516040  
Owner Name: Judith K. Gallagher  
Premise Address: 17709 Comus Road  
Mailing Address: 17801 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 9**

Account Number: 11-02516062  
Owner Name: Hans Hanses  
Premise Address: 17713 Comus Road  
Mailing Address: c/o Posweg 26  
37671 Hoexter, Germany FC

**No. 10**

Account Number: 11-02516051  
Owner Name: Judith K. Gallagher  
Premise/Mailing Address: 17801 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 11**

Account Number: 11-00918642  
Owner name: Windmill Farm, LLC  
Premise Address: 18101 Comus Road  
Mailing Address: c/o Philip L. O'Donoghue  
8401 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 1100  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

**No. 12**

Account Number: 11-03272093

Owner Name: Robert W. Sheaffer

Premise/Mailing Address: 17401 Comus Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

**No. 13**

Account Number: 11-03248275

Owner: David Langstaff

Premise Address: Comus Road

Mailing Address: 24020 Old Hundred Road  
Comus, Maryland 20842

NUMBER	DATE	CHORD BEARING	TKM.	BEARING	ARC	CHORD
1	27° 02' 42" W	3 09' 53.07" E	358.87	110° 02' 23"	105.32	157.72

14225.361

TRACT 2  
PARCEL TWO  
18182 33

TRACT 3  
18182 45

TRACT 1  
LIBER 18182 FOLIO 22  
224.4027 ACRES

BOUNDARY SURVEY DRAWING  
PROPERTY OF  
WILLIAM D. PLEASANTS JR. & CLAUDIA F. PLEASANTS

SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE  
I hereby certify that the property shown herein is the property of William D. Pleasants Jr. and Claudia F. Pleasants and represents the same as the same is shown on this plan.

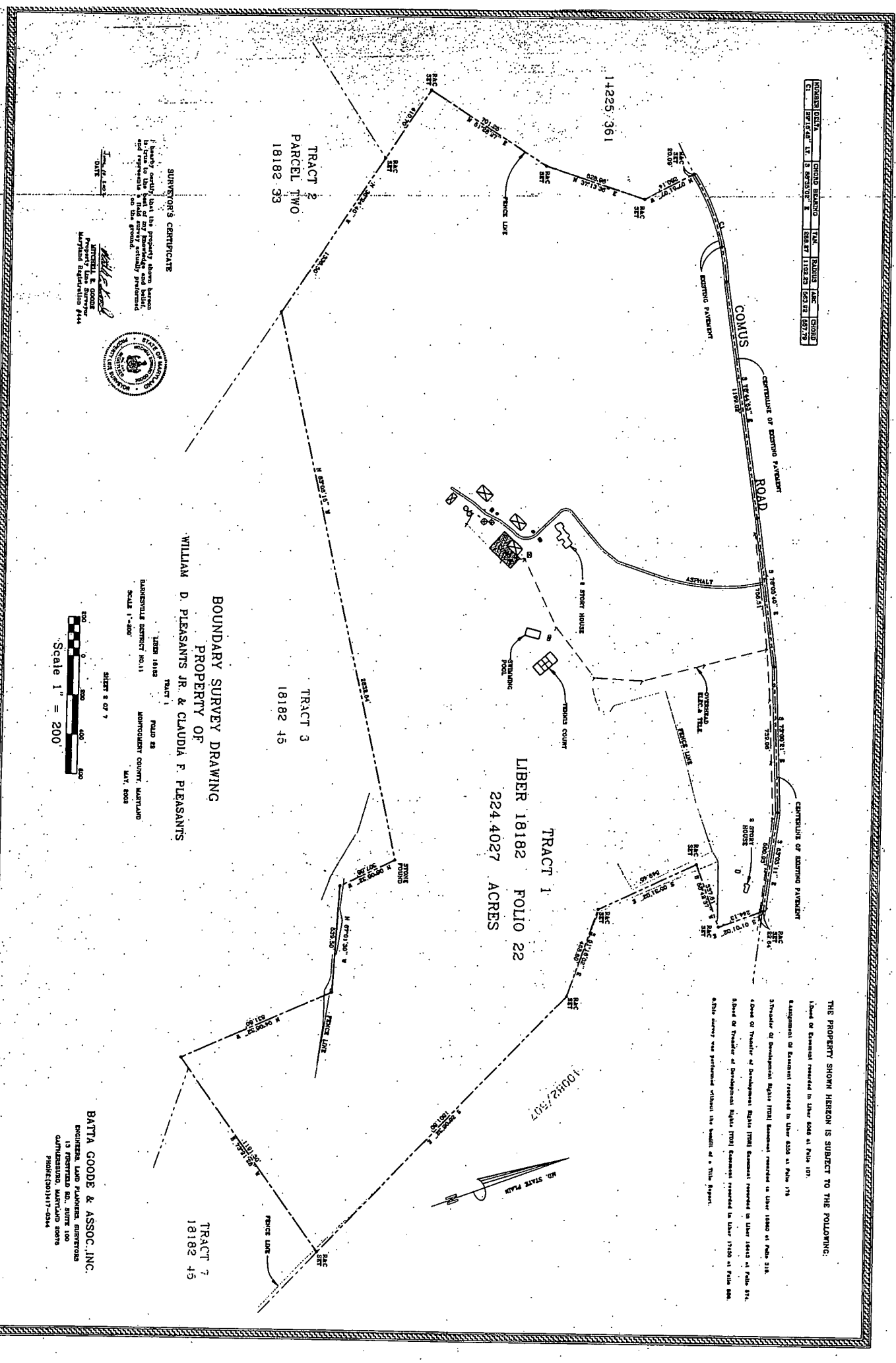


SHEET 8 OF 7


LIBER 10182 FOLIO 22  
BALTIMORE DISTRICT NO. 11  
SCALE 1" = 200'  
ANNAPOLIS COUNTY, MARYLAND  
MAY, 2008

BATTA GOODE & ASSOC., INC.  
ENGINEERS, LAND PLANNERS, SURVEYORS  
13 FORTSTREET RD., SUITE 100  
CANTERSVILLE, MARYLAND 20746  
PHONE: (301) 717-0244

THE PROPERTY SHOWN HEREON IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:  
1. Load or Easement recorded in Liber 6256 at Page 157.  
2. Easement of Easement recorded in Liber 6256 at Page 178.  
3. Easement of Development Right (DR) Easement recorded in Liber 1840 at Page 218.  
4. Easement of Development Right (DR) Easement recorded in Liber 1842 at Page 218.  
5. Easement of Development Right (DR) Easement recorded in Liber 1750 at Page 208.  
6. This survey was prepared without the benefit of a title report.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT

**Address:** 17700 Comus Road, Dickerson      **Meeting Date:** 4/11/2007  
**Resource:** *Master Plan Site #12/5*      **Report Date:** 4/4/2007  
**James Pearré Farm**  
**Applicant:** William and Claudia Pleasant      **Public Notice:** 3/28/2007  
**Review:** Preliminary Consultation      **Tax Credit:** Partial  
**Case Number:**       **Staff:** Anne Fothergill  
**PROPOSAL:** Addition

**RECOMMENDATION:** Revise and return for another Preliminary Consultation

---

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Individually Designated *Master Plan Site #12/5*  
**STYLE:** Greek Revival  
**DATE:** c. 1857-60

*Excerpt from Places in the Past:*

Situated in the shadow of Sugarloaf Mountain, the James Pearré Farm has been operated for close to a century by the Pearré family, substantial farmers and prominent citizens of early upper Montgomery County. James Pearré is thought to have built the house soon after he acquired the property in 1857 from his father. The center passage frame house has rare double external chimneys on one gable end that have stone bases and brick stacks. The front facade features a Greek Revival influenced doorway with transom and sidelights, and extra long windows on the first level. A 1914 ad described the 223-acre farmstead "improved by a large spacious dwelling house, containing 12 rooms, large halls, cellar and fine porches." By this era the "mansion house" was supplied with "pure spring water" by means of "a hydraulic ram." A fine, early bank barn (45' x 70'), with stone foundation and closed forebay, has round-arched louvered windows and three wooden cupolas. The farmstead includes an outstanding collection of log outbuildings, with a double corn house with steeply pitched roof; smokehouse; dairy; and small barn.

At the time of designation on the *Master Plan*, the environmental setting for this farm was reduced to 6.7 acres around the house so as to not include non-historic buildings for farming. Before the property was listed on the *Master Plan*, there were a number of additions to this house including sections built in the 1920s and the 1960s. The previous owner granted a conservation easement over the property to the Maryland Environmental Trust.

PROPOSAL

The applicants propose to construct a two-story side addition. They also propose to restore the historic outbuildings on the property.

The addition will be built behind the original massing. The new wing will connect at the right side where

the 1920s addition and part of the 1960s section of the house are and will extend out to the side beyond the existing asphalt driveway. There are three sections to the addition: the connector is lower in height, the proposed main massing is five bays and taller than the house, and the third section steps down in height and goes back further. The proposed materials are a stone foundation, stucco, wood siding, and a metal roof.

The applicants have strategically placed the new wing in this location to maximize the mountain views while preserving the large trees at the rear right side of the house.

A proposed site plan and existing and proposed elevations are on pages 11-14. Photos of the house and farm are on pages 15-37. Letters of support for this plan from neighbors are on pages 38-46.

### **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

When reviewing alterations to a *Master Plan* site two documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents are *Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A)* and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

#### ***Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A***

A HAWP permit should be issued if the Commission finds that:

1. The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of a historic site or historic resource within a historic district.
2. The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical archaeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which a historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto of to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter.

In the case of an application for work on a historic resource located within a historic district, the Commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for structures of little historical or design significance or for plans involving new construction, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district.

#### ***Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:***

Standard #2 The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Standard #9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Standard #10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environments would be unimpaired.

## **STAFF DISCUSSION**

This is a very important *Master Plan* site and any proposed changes will receive the highest level of scrutiny from staff and the Commission. Unfortunately the original house has been substantially altered over time, but staff is concerned about allowing further changes that could further reduce its integrity. Future compatible additions are possible, especially since there are later additions at the back of the house that could be removed and more sympathetic additions could be built at the rear.

Staff's main concern about this proposal is the potential adverse impact of the addition of a new side wing that is taller and larger than the original house. The height and size of this side addition will undoubtedly have a major impact on this house and the setting. When someone approaches the house from the road, the new wing will be very visible and a very prominent part of the house and could detract from the historic house.

It should be noted that the new wing starts behind the historic massing, which will help to differentiate it and perhaps help it appear smaller since it is set back. Since the addition is connected behind the historic house it will only touch the 1920s and 1960s sections of the house, not the 19<sup>th</sup> century massing.

Staff knows that the applicants have good intentions for this property as they love the farm and want to make this their home for many years. They also want to restore the long-neglected but very significant outbuildings as part of their overall plan for the house and farm. As can be seen by the many letters from neighbors, the owners have the support of many people in the area who, like staff, want to see the house and outbuildings restored and used. However, staff is concerned about the impact of such a large and tall side wing to this important historic house and the overall setting and recommends exploring a reconfiguration of interior space and new side additions to the rear 1960s section as possible solutions. Staff agrees with the applicants that any additions should be designed so that the trees at the rear right side of the house are protected and preserved.

The owners are in the early stages of their plans and are coming to the Commission for a Preliminary Consultation to see whether the HPC will support this plan or if they need to make some major revisions or possibly consider another site on the property for their house.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the applicants revise their plans based on the comments of staff and return to the HPC for a second Preliminary Consultation.

*William D. & Claudia F. Pleasants, Jr.*  
*24012 Frederick Road*  
*Clarksburg, Maryland 20871*

A -  
prelim

March 21, 2007

Ms. Anne Fothergill  
*Historic Preservation Planner*  
The Maryland-National Capital  
Park & Planning Commission  
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: 17700 Comus Road, Dickerson, Maryland

Dear Ms. Fothergill:

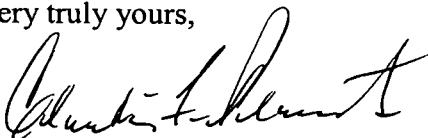
It was a pleasure meeting with you the other day at our property located on Comus Road. We appreciated your help in determining the necessary requirements and preparation that may be needed in order to move forward on our project.

With regard to the above-referenced address, enclosed is the information that is necessary to complete the Application for Historic Area Work Permit:

- 1) Application for Historic Area Work Permit
- 2) Written Description of Project both (a) & (b) – under separate cover
- 3) Site Plan
- 4) Plans and Elevations for existing structure and proposed changes
- 5) Materials Specifications – see 1.b.
- 6) Photographs
- 7) Tree Survey – shown on site plan
- 8) Addresses of Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners (listed under separate cover)
- 9) Boundary Survey Drawing, May 2002

We look forward to attending the Historic Preservation Commission meeting scheduled for April 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m., in Silver Springs. If you should have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (301) 428-0800.

Very truly yours,



Claudia F. Pleasants

Enclosures





RETURN TO DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES  
245 ROCKVILLE PIKE, 2ND FLOOR, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850  
240/777-6370

DPS - #8

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
301/563-3400

# APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Person: Don Pleasants  
Daytime Phone No.: (301) 428-0800

Tax Account No.: 11-00915444

Name of Property Owner: William D. and Claudia Pleasants, Jr. Daytime Phone No.: (301) 428-0800

Address: 24012 Frederick Road, Clarksburg, MD 20871  
Street Number City State Zip Code

Contractor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Contractor Registration No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent for Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

### LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE

House Number: 17700 Street: Comus Road

Town/City: Dickerson Nearest Cross Street: Route 109

Lot: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision: \_\_\_\_\_

Lib: \_\_\_\_\_ Folio: \_\_\_\_\_ Parcel: 223.41 acres

### PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

#### 1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- Construct
- Extend
- Alter/Renovate
- Move
- Install
- Wreck/Teardown
- Revision
- Repair
- Revocable

#### CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- A/C
- Slab
- Room Addition
- Porch
- Deck
- Shed
- Solar
- Fireplace
- Woodburning Stove
- Single Family
- Fence/Well (complete Section 4)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ undetermined

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit # \_\_\_\_\_

### PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01  WSSC 02  Septic 03  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2B. Type of water supply: 01  WSSC 02  Well 03  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL

3A. Height \_\_\_\_\_ feet \_\_\_\_\_ inches

3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:

- On party line/property line
- Entirely on land of owner
- On public right of way/easement

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Signature of owner or authorized agent

3/21/07  
Date

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Application/Permit No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Filed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Issued: \_\_\_\_\_

**William D. Pleasants, Jr. and Claudia F. Pleasants  
24012 Frederick Rd., Clarksburg, MD 20871**

**Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission  
Application for Historic Area Work Permit  
17700 Comus Road, Dickerson, MD 20842**

**Preliminary Hearing  
April 11, 2007**

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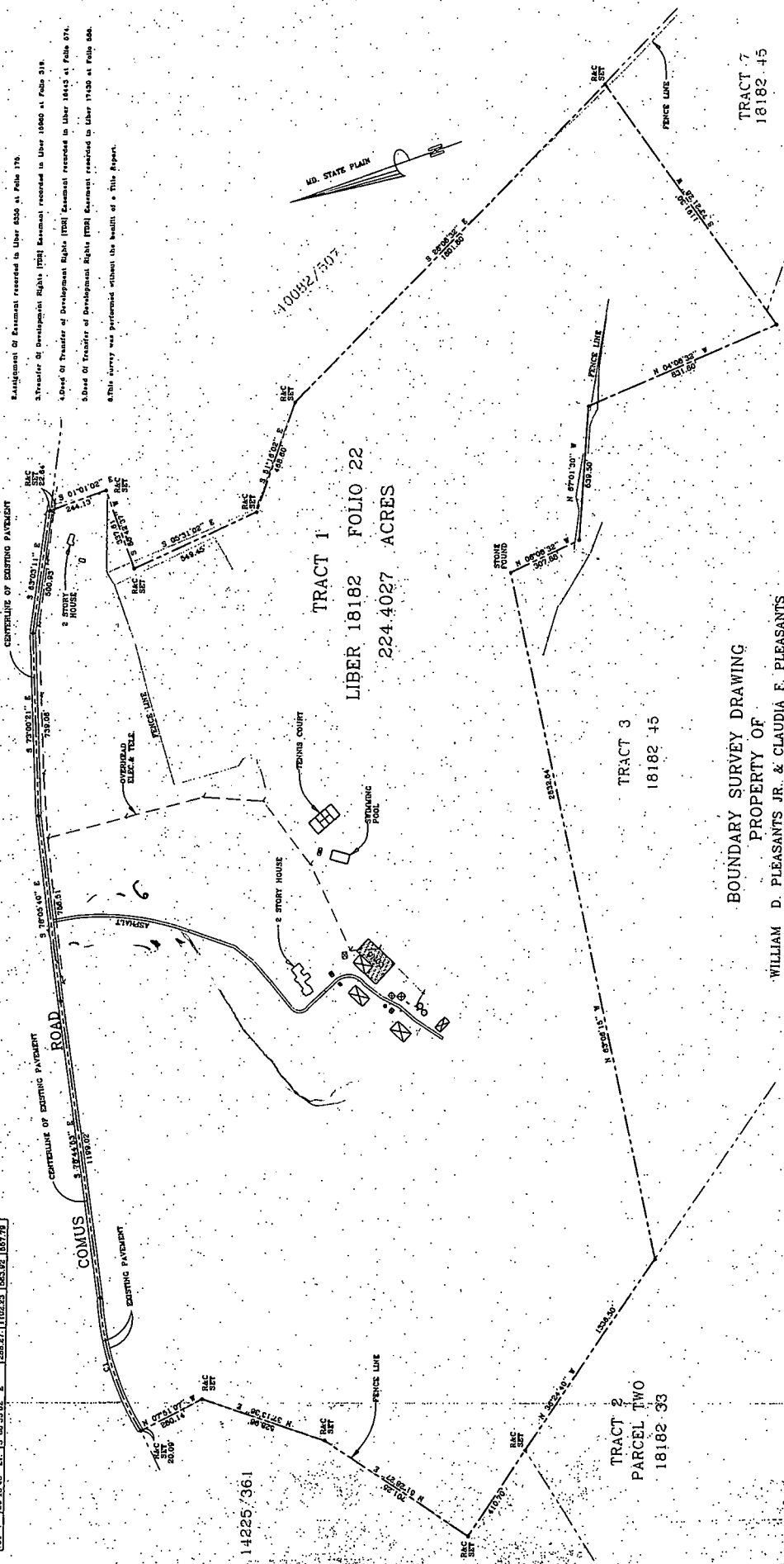
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THE PROPERTY SHOWN HEREON IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Load of Easement recorded in Liber 1000 at Page 197.
2. Easement of Easement recorded in Liber 830 at Page 178.
3. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Easement recorded in Liber 1000 at Page 318.
4. Load of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Easement recorded in Liber 1000 at Page 318.
5. Load of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Easement recorded in Liber 1910 at Page 306.
6. This survey was performed without the benefit of a Title Report.

NUMBER	DELTA	CHORD BEARING	PLAN	BEARING	ARC	CHORD
C1	297.18'	S 87°51'02" E	208.27'	112°23'	145.36'	107.72'



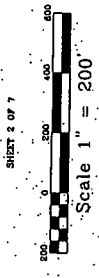
BOUNDARY SURVEY DRAWING  
PROPERTY OF  
WILLIAM D. PLEASANTS JR. & CLAUDIA F. PLEASANTS



SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE  
I hereby certify that the property shown hereon has been surveyed and measured and that the bearings and distances are true and correct as shown on the ground.  
*William D. Pleasants Jr.*  
Property Line Surveyor  
Maryland Registration #444

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_

LIBER 18182 FOLIO 22  
BALTIMORE DISTRICT NO. 11  
SCALE 1" = 200'  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
MAY, 2003



SHEET 2 OF 7

BATTA GOODE & ASSOC., INC.  
ENGINEERS, LAND PLANNERS, SURVEYORS  
COURT HOUSE, BALTIMORE, MD 21202  
PHONE (301) 417-3344

10

**Fothergill, Anne**

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**From:** SUGARBOS4@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 03, 2007 11:39 PM  
**To:** Fothergill, Anne  
**Cc:** CPleasants@pleasants.org  
**Subject:** Pleasants hearing before Mont. Co. Historic Preservation Commission April 11, 20

Dear Ms. Fothergill,

We are neighbors of the property in question and at one time considered purchasing it. Our interest and concern was limited due to the great deal of work that had to be done to the existing structure to make it a comfortable and updated living space. The original structure was built to a poor standard, creating a building that did not hold up to the vagaries of time. The additions that were added in the fifties were to accommodate family needs but not of historical value.

We support the request on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Pleasants to update and remodel the existing structure. We feel that the value of the property will be enhanced by a more environmentally efficient private residence. The Pleasant family has demonstrated their desire to support the local community and its history. We believe that the rejuvenated building of this structure would greatly enhance the the value of this community.

Sincerely,

Rainer and Beverley Bosselmann  
16715 Thurston Road  
Dickerson, MD 20842  
(301)428-8316

---

See what's free at [AOL.com](http://AOL.com).

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## Fothergill, Anne

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**From:** James Wilbur [jlwilbur@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 03, 2007 11:40 PM  
**To:** Fothergill, Anne  
**Cc:** jlwilbur@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Letter of Support for Don and Claudia Pleasants

Dear Anne:

I am writing in support of the application of Don and Claudia Pleasants, scheduled for a preliminary hearing on April 11, 2007.

The Pleasants have been trying to obtain permission to renovate and add an addition to the existing historic farmhouse at 17700 Comus Rd, Dickerson, MD, for several years. They have worked through three alternate plans with staff over the last several years. I support approval of their application.

Their application serves the land and community well. They are seeking to preserve the historic portion of the structure, and complete a renovation and addition to make the property useable for them. Their structural changes include adding a two story wing, and renovating the remaining footprint of the existing structure. They plan to use materials (stone, board, metal roof, etc.) to reflect the character of the original structure and the native building materials. They have also proposed to restore the log outbuildings and barn if the proposal is allowed. The applicants have also agreed to disturb the existing mature trees as little as possible.

Approving their application serves the interest of the applicant and the surrounding community. This farmhouse is located on a large tract of land that could support agriculture. By allowing the owners to create a livable, updated home on the property, it assures the long term preservation of the setting by the owners' use of the property. If the owners are not allowed to make a habitable residence, it increases the likelihood that the property is sold, divide or developed by others.

Denying their application in an effort to preserve the existing structure in its intact form is, in essence, destroying a forest to preserve a tree. Without a habitable home, the owners cannot use the land. The land becomes more prone to division and development, with a high likelihood that existing structures fall into greater disrepair, if not total destruction. By making an allowance to update the existing structure, the historic farmhouse can once again serve as a home, the land can be preserved and other interesting outbuildings can be restored.

Again, I support their application and encourage rapid approval.

Sincerely,

James L. Wilbur

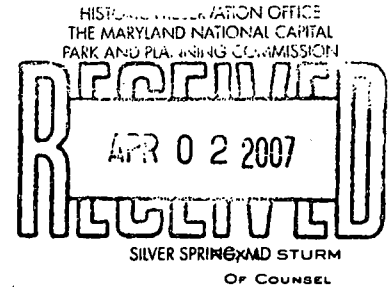
A resident of Montgomery County  
16201 West Old Baltimore Rd., Boyds, MD, 20841  
(301) 916-6684  
jlwilbur@yahoo.com

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ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850-2333  
TELEPHONE (301) 762-2555 · TELECOPIER (301) 762-1928

R. EDWIN BROWN  
DENNIS M. ETTLIN



March 31, 2007

Ms. Anne Fothergill, Historic Preservation Planner  
The Maryland-National Capital Park  
& Planning Commission  
1109 Spring St, #801  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

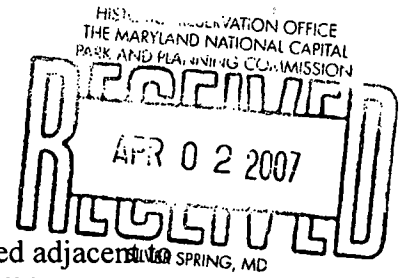
Dear Ms. Fothergill:

Mrs. Brown and I reside at 19810 Peachtree Rd, Dickerson, MD in the heart of the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve. We have lived there for approximately 60 years in an old house built in 1910. As the crow flies, we are approximately 6 miles from the Farr property near Sugarloaf Mountain. If we could not, over the years, have remodeled, improved, and added to the structure, our situation would be intolerable.

Mr. and Mrs. Pleasants purchased the property at 17700 Comus Rd, Dickerson, MD after Mr. Farr died. The Farr property contains approximately 1,100 acres. The bulk of the land is in reservation and must continue in agricultural use.

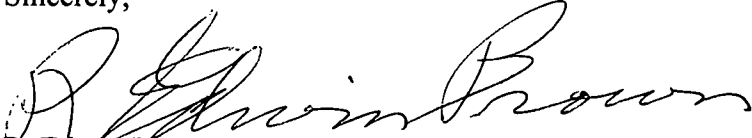
The Farr dwelling has very little to recommend it for modern living. Mr. and Mrs. Pleasants' application to extend and improve the structure in a historically pleasing manner with materials that blend with the present structure should most certainly be acted upon favorably and approved.

I don't know of any project that would better preserve the spirit and function of the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve than to permit these applicants to remodel and improve their dwelling in a historically pleasing manner. This will aid the continuing agricultural use of this enormous track of land.



A remodeled and well cared for historically preserved country mansion located adjacent to Montgomery County's "country road to the Sugarloaf Mountain entrance" will be an improvement and asset to the mountain, the local community, Comus, and the entire area of Montgomery County adjacent to the Frederick County boundary line.

Sincerely,

  
R. Edwin Brown



March 29, 2007

Ms. Anne Fothergill  
Historic Preservation Planner  
The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission  
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910



Dear Ms. Fothergill,

My wife and I are adjacent landowners to the track of land known as Final Conclusion that is owned by Don and Claudia Pleasants. We are aware of their preliminary hearing on April 11, 2007, with the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and wish to express our support in their petition. Their continued efforts and expense while working through many alternate plans with staff over the last several years to preserve the historic portion of the structure, complete a renovation and addition to make the property useable for them is to be commended. As a landowner and resident of the Agriculture Reserve for fourteen years we can think of no other continuous track of undeveloped land that is more important for preservation as an asset to the County, the Reserve and its residents. The property, as an animal habitat, together with its undeveloped vistas, proximity to Sugarloaf Mountain and many other assets are a keystone to the spirit and intent of the Agriculture Reserve.

We, all of our neighbors and the other adjacent landowners support the Pleasents' proposed changes to the main residence on the property which reflect a requirement for modern living while preserving the character of the original structure, its native building materials and with minimal disruption to the original land. Their additional desire to restore the log outbuildings and barn, if the proposal is allowed, is the essence of preservation. All of us in the Agriculture Reserve take pride in our involved efforts to ensure responsible stewardship of the privilege we have been afforded. Through great expense and effort the landowners of the Reserve continue to endure the overwhelming pressures from outside development that would destroy this protected area for future generations.

Preservation needs to be viewed as a whole value. Absentee landowners serve the interests of no one. We request that the Commission afford the Pleasents every reasonable consideration in their attempt to live on, enjoy and preserve their investment to the benefit of us all.

We appreciate your consideration and efforts on behalf of the residents of the County and the Agriculture Reserve.

Respectfully yours,

Ronald L. & Juanita W. Breland  
Comus Sky Farm  
22900 Old Hundred Road  
Barnesville, Maryland 20838



**Fothergill, Anne**

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**From:** Bodell, Robert [rmbodell@chevy Chase Bank.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 28, 2007 4:54 PM  
**To:** Fothergill, Anne  
**Subject:** FW: 17700 Comus Road

I am writing in support of Don and Claudia Pleasant's plan for historic preservation and renovation of the property at 17700 Comus Road in Dickerson, Maryland. I have talked with them many times about this project and even suggested a builder to help with their project. I know they have worked on several plans with the county to preserve the historic section and use the same footprint to be renovated while adding a new wing to reflect the flow of modern living. They plan on using materials, such as stone, board and a metal roof to reflect the character of the original structure. In addition, they are planning on restoring the log outbuildings and a barn as well using native building materials. The mature trees, which they know add beauty, will be disturbed as little as possible.

I am a resident of nearby Barnesville and helped the original owners move out as they donated many items to the Barnesville School several years ago. I admire the property and do hope that an approval can be accomplished with Montgomery County.

This renovation will stop any further deterioration of the historic section and preserve it as well as other buildings on the property for the long term. If I can be of additional assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Bob Bodell  
Vice President  
Chevy Chase Bank  
Mortgage Division  
1009 West Patrick St.  
Frederick, MD 21701  
301-695-4498 Office  
301-467-4321 Cell  
301-663-1996 Fax  
rmbodell@chevy Chase Bank.net  
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Chevy Chase Bank  
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**Fothergill, Anne**

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**From:** Vicki Crawford [VickiSkip@intairnet.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 02, 2007 2:00 PM  
**To:** Fothergill, Anne  
**Subject:** Pleasant's Project

Dear Ms. Fothergill,

I am a board member of the Montgomery Historical Society and was very excited to hear that Don and Claudia Pleasants bought the Farr property in Comus. Knowing them, I am sure that they will do wonderful things to the farm and buildings, ensuring that the proper historical sections of the main farmhouse will be preserved and that any new addition/remodeling will be done in extremely good taste. Knowing the size of their family, it will be a house that they will be proud to live in and entertain a large family gathering without feeling cramped. That house, as it currently stands, has no great area for entertaining a large family gathering. It is a rabbit warren of small rooms and gives one a very "closed in" feeling. I know that you are excited about making sure the proper remodeling and construction of this farmhouse and farm takes place in a timely manner and that tasteful additions will be approved.

We constructed a house in 1989 near Barnesville, using that farmhouse as our guide because I have always loved that farm. When we designed our house, we used the same outside color scheme, sans shutters, adding a log cabin on one end of the house. However, we decided to leave the log cabin as one big room and make the other rooms on the first floor open and flowing for entertaining, which we do with great frequency. At the same time, we wanted our house to look old as though "it had always been on that hill." In fact, I told our architect that the house had to blend with dogs, cats, horses, and dirt!

I welcome you for a visit if you care to see what we have done. In the meantime, I applaud your input into this project.

Sincerely,  
Vicki Crawford

♥Vicki Crawford  
Hunter's Trap Farm  
17201 Whites Store Road  
Boys, MD 20841  
301-972-7621

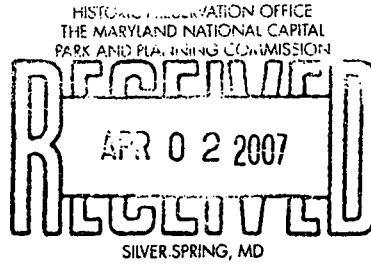
4/3/2007

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*Walter H. Magruder, Jr.*

12165 Darnestown Road  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

March 28, 2007



Ms. Anne Fothergill  
Historic Preservation Planner  
The Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission  
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Fothergill:

I am a close neighbor to the property owned by Mr. And Mrs. Don Pleasants at 17700 Comus Road, Dickerson, Maryland. I therefore have a very personal interest in what happens to their property.

I am a member of the Montgomery County Historical Society and a supporter of Heritage Montgomery. Obviously I have a keen interest and sensitivity to historic properties, especially rural farm properties.

From the description of their focus and how they plan to not only preserve the historic elements of the home but also make it conform to today's codes and life safety aspects I find particularly exciting.

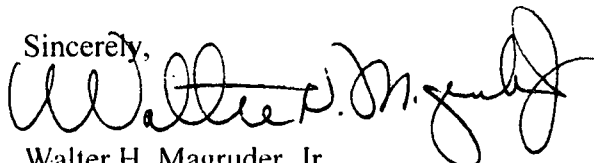
The notion of restoring and enhancing the home, and outbuildings, to include a beautiful bank barn and an ancient log structure is very important to our community.

Properties such as this one may eventually fall into disrepair and ultimately be lost forever if people who are willing and able are not permitted to have a somewhat free hand in their efforts.

I believe the Pleasants have every intention of restoring and improving this entire property to a degree that will make us all proud.

Please consider this request and allow them to proceed and keep alive a testament of a wonderful by gone era.

Sincerely,



Walter H. Magruder, Jr.  
23500 MT. EPHRAIM ROAD (Home Address)

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THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

----- X  
PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION - :  
17700 Comus Road :  
----- X

A meeting in the above-entitled matter was held on April 11, 2007, commencing  
at 7:45 p.m., in the MRO Auditorium at 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910,  
before:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Julia O'Malley

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

David Rotenstein  
Jeff Fuller  
Lee Burstyn  
Warren Fleming  
Nuray Anahtar

ALSO PRESENT:

Gwen Wright  
Stacy Patterson  
Judy Christianson  
Anne Fothergill  
Michele Oaks

APPEARANCES

STATEMENT OF:

PAGE

Don Pleasants

PROCEEDINGS

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MS. FOTHERGILL: This is a preliminary consultation for an individually designated Master Plan Site, the James Pearre Farm. This is a circa 1857 Greek Revival house that was in the Pearre family for about a hundred years, and at the time of the designation on the Master Plan, the larger farm, the environmental setting was reduced to only 6.7 acres which are now on the Master Plan so as not to include the non-historic buildings that were used for farming because it is a farm.

And before the property was listed on the Master Plan, there were a number of additions to this house, including sections that were built in the 1920s and the 1960s. The applicants are proposing, as you saw in your packet, to construct a two story side addition, and they also propose to restore the historic outbuildings on the property. There is a bank barn and a collection of log outbuildings, a double corned house and a smokehouse.

And what I would like to do is show you some visuals of the property and then the applicants will come up and talk about what they are proposing to do, and I just want to mention that there were a number of letters of support from neighbors in your staff report, but you also received at the work session six additional letters in the record. But I'll show you the visuals and then we can talk about what they're proposing.

1                   This is an aerial view and you can see the house here and the barn, and then the  
2 working farm that's outside of the environmental setting. But you can see that the house has been  
3 added on to. You can also see well in these aerial shots the trees that the applicants are proposing  
4 to protect, and that is why they have located the addition where they have. So you'll note that here  
5 towards the rear right of the house.

6                   And this is the front of the house. And that right section that you can see is  
7 approximately where they are proposing to build the addition is actually set a little forward of that  
8 as you can see in your plans in your packet. And this is the right side, and the new wing would  
9 come out here, and is wider than the historic house, and is taller as you can see in their plan.

10                  This is just walking around the house. And these are some of the trees that they  
11 are proposing to protect by not constructing the addition near the trees. And this is the view that  
12 they want to maximize. This is the wonderful view of Sugarloaf Mountain. It's really a  
13 beautiful farm and a beautiful setting. This is the back of the house, one of the later additions.  
14 And then this is looking down towards those outbuildings which are very significant and are in  
15 need of restoration. Some have been neglected and some have been sort of not so well attended to.

16                  And part of the overall plan for the property would be to build the new wing and  
17 then also to restore the outbuildings as part of their plan. And this is going around the left side.  
18 Again, this is towards the back of the house, the later addition and those are the double chimneys  
19 that are called out in the designation as a significant feature.

20                  The concern staff has is the impact of such a large prominent addition to this  
21 house. That it could detract from the historic house and adversely affect it. So the applicants are  
22 here. They've been waiting, they've been here since the beginning of the meeting. I'm sure they're  
23 eager to come up and would like to talk to you and see if you think this is a possibly approvable  
24 addition.

25                  MS. O'MALLEY: Could you just show that overhead, the one that best shows the  
26 house.

1 MR. FULLER: Madam Chair, it's a great piece of property, but I'm going to have  
2 to excuse myself on this property. My firm DNC Architects has done a fair amount of work with  
3 Core Development years ago and a little bit ongoing. So I won't be available to talk tonight.

4 MS. O'MALLEY: Would the applicants like to come up, please.

5 MR. PLEASANTS: Good evening, I'm Don Pleasants, and this is my wife,  
6 Claudia Pleasants. We appreciate the opportunity to come in tonight to at least present our case,  
7 and hopefully be able to come up with a resolution, or at least a decision for us on how to move  
8 forward with this property.

9 We purchased this property in 2000. It's a large farm. It has an environmental  
10 easement on it. The entire property can only have, I think it's 13 houses on it. It's 1125 acres.  
11 And our plans are to build our home some place on that property. Initially when we first bought  
12 the property, we had no intention of trying to build at the location of the existing house. I just, it's  
13 not a house that is suitable for our needs.

14 It's our intention to try build someplace on the property. And originally we had no  
15 intention of trying to build at this location because of the condition of the old house. The  
16 configuration of it, and just everything about the house itself doesn't lend itself to very modern  
17 living. And certainly not of a size that we need.

18 We have a very large family. On holidays we'll have somewhere close to 50 and I  
19 have to do all the cooking. So we've a nice large kitchen. And we worked with staff and trying to  
20 come up with different approaches. We've met on the site a couple of times. Anne Fothergill has  
21 been out and looked at it. Gwen Wright has been out and looked at the property. And as you can  
22 see from looking at the photographs on this house, it has had lots of modifications to it over the  
23 years. The original part of the house was built in, somewhere around, I think it was 1857 or 9,  
24 somewhere around that time frame.

25 And the original part of the house was only a small portion of the addition, the  
26 section that has the twin chimneys on it. There was another addition added on the side of that.

1 And then in the approximately 1920s the back section was added on, and then again in the 1960s  
2 another section was added and the whole place was stuccoed at that time.

3 So really all you're seeing there that's original, I think, is some of the roof, the two  
4 fireplaces, and the windows, and you've got the stucco covering over it. And what we're proposing  
5 to do is the 1960s addition is basically tear that off and in essentially the same footprint of that  
6 piece, but another addition in that section.

7 Very little change in the size of that. A little bit of additional width and slight  
8 additional height on that portion of it. Then on the, as you're approaching the house on the right  
9 side, we're proposing a fairly large addition. And I've tried, I'm not an architect and went to, we've  
10 been dealing with architects, and this is our fourth iteration of plans on this thing, and I finally  
11 decided on this one that, after talking with staff, I tried to come up with something that I thought  
12 might work.

13 So I've drawn this up. I know an architect can improve dramatically on the  
14 appearance of what I've put together in the package that you've got there. But, from a physical  
15 layout on the site, I don't know much else that we can do. Because we've explored lots of other  
16 alternatives on the site, and any other alternative we think we would get into the trees, or we'd get  
17 into the structures, the log structures behind the house.

18 So our goal tonight, I think, is to try to find out whether or not what we are  
19 proposing is somewhere along the lines of something that would be acceptable. I think it would be  
20 a win/win situation for everyone. It'd certainly give me and my wife the ability to build on the site  
21 that we've actually kind of fallen in love with since we've owned the property. And we would  
22 really like to restore the outbuildings, the barns. It's really what I like about the property, or the  
23 outbuildings. If you want to know the truth, I don't like the existing house at all.

24 But I'm willing to try to work with it, and salvage what we can of it, and restore  
25 what we can of it. But we still need to make a decision whether to try to work with that site or to  
26 move to another location on the property. I'm maybe kind of rambling, but let me look at my notes



1 here a second, please. One of the reasons that the wing that's off to the right is as large as it, we  
2 need a ground floor master. My wife has had one knee replaced, and another one on the way.

3 So we really do need a ground floor master, and that's, when you do that you wind  
4 up with a fairly large footprint. The existing house itself doesn't lend itself to the master. I can put  
5 an office in a portion of it, and we can use part of it for a community type room for our family  
6 when we have gatherings, but the rest of the ground floor of that house is really not suitable for  
7 modern living.

8 The ceiling is not very high, and one of the problems we've got with this house is  
9 that similar to the house the gentleman was talking about earlier, it's built very close to the ground.  
10 In fact, there are portions of this house where the dirt on the outside grade is up on the, higher than  
11 the bottom of the floor joists by probably 6 or 8 inches, and that doesn't even meet current codes.

12 And by putting the wing on the right side, I can accomplish grading that will  
13 allow me to bring that grade down around the rest of that house and not create a problem with the  
14 trees. The addition, if we did put on, has a portion, I've narrowed that portion down as narrow as I  
15 can reasonably make it in order to keep the height of the roof as low as it is. And it is still higher  
16 than the existing house. But I set it back, as you can see from one of the elevations there, I think  
17 it's the north elevation. There's some broken lines that show how far that sets back behind the  
18 other portion of the house.

19 And the purpose of doing that was to try to at least create some what of a back set  
20 so that the old portion of the house sat out front and was at least kind of the first thing you see  
21 when you approach the property. The house sets, the current house sets right at 1000 feet off of  
22 the roadway. And it is private property. And we don't have any neighbors that are very close to us  
23 from that perspective.

24 We do have one house that's been built right across from the driveway, which is  
25 kind of contemporary in design. So we're not detracting, I don't believe, from the neighborhood.  
26 And we really want to try to build a nice looking place there.

1 MS. O'MALLEY: Well, how about if I suggest this, we do have one speaker from  
2 Historic Medley, and maybe we could let her make her comments. And then I know the  
3 commissioners have a couple of questions.

4 MR. PLEASANTS: Okay, certainly.

5 MS. CASH: I'm Carry Cash, and with Historic Medley District. And the whole  
6 neighborhood held it's breath when we heard the Pearres were selling this property, and there were  
7 tears everywhere. But the Pleasants bought the property and you can see from the number of  
8 letters how much support there is. The biggest concern of Historic Medley was that the old house,  
9 which we have pictures that show it quite different from this.

10 It really went through some hard times during the '60s. Our pictures were from  
11 earlier than that, and we were concerned that it had fallen in such disrepair. So whatever can be  
12 done to integrate it into the lifestyle of the new owners would be or, or the current owner, would  
13 certainly be a great relief that the old house can be preserved.

14 Looking at the plans that are shown tonight, it looks, the new addition looks out of  
15 scale, but I'm looking at drawings and I haven't been on the property in a number of years. If there  
16 is anything which Historic Medley can do, Vicki Crawford, one of the neighbors, contacted us and  
17 said, would you talk to the Pleasants about what they're trying to do and so we thought maybe we'd  
18 probably hear from you, but we'll be glad to help if we can.

19 We would like to save the old building, and we appreciate that it doesn't fit their  
20 life, but it, in its day it was, it was the MacMansion of its day. And so, it's scale needs to be kept  
21 to some extent, it needs to be able to read that way from some direction, if that's at all possible.  
22 Thank you.

23 MS. O'MALLEY: Any questions? Okay, thanks. Did any of the commissioners  
24 have questions at this point. I'm sorry if I interrupted you. Did you have other things that you  
25 wanted to say?

26 MR. PLEASANTS: The only thing that I was going to say is, I'd like to get

1 guidance really so I can make a decision go on with this. I'm getting a lot of pressure to get a  
2 house built on the site, and I need to make a decision whether to try to continue down this path, or  
3 to build on another location. I do have another location that I've already had parked, and I got  
4 confirmation back today that that is approvable park, and I just, I'd really like to make a decision  
5 on which way I want to go here on this property.

6 MS. O'MALLEY: Can I ask you a question. I'm not quite clear myself. There's  
7 the original portion of the house which I would assume is the front facade that's shown on 12. But  
8 it would just be that very first, just that front portion not the rear portion showing.

9 MS. FOTHERGILL: No, it's the rear portion that doesn't show.

10 MR. PLEASANTS: You see this break right here in the roof line, this portion of  
11 the house here to the left, I believe is log. I'm not positive, I believe it's log. If you're in the attic  
12 you can see the old gabled end of the house. It's still up here, it's just siding. And then this portion  
13 here was added on sometime between 1859 and I don't know what date. That's the only portion of  
14 the original house as far as, to my knowledge.

15 Behind that you're looking at twelve, the portion that's behind that front part was  
16 added on in the 1914, 1920 time frame, somewhere in there. The projection that's sticking out, --  
17 Anne, can you flip it to the side view for that, please? -- This portion from here back to along here  
18 was added on in about the 1920s. This section that's built out right here, I believe, and everyone  
19 else seems to believe, was added in the 1960s, and the addition back here was also added.

20 This is just looking at inside and outside and everything else, that's when it looks  
21 like it was added on. So the portion back here we're planning on completely tearing off, and  
22 rebuilding with something that looks more in tune with the existing architecture. And this has got,  
23 they're just metal windows and just doesn't look very nice at all, in my opinion.

24 And we were going to attach the new addition here and bring it out this direction  
25 is what we're proposing to do.

26 MS. O'MALLEY: Commissioner Rotenstein.

1 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Yeah, I have a question for staff. What's the period of  
2 significance for the building?

3 MS. FOTHERGILL: I don't, I mean, I don't believe it was determined in the  
4 designation, but the part of what made it significant was the farm. That it was owned by this  
5 family grew into the 20th Century.

6 MS. CASH: The Pearre family is one of the earliest families in that area, and the  
7 part to the left is believed to be from the 18th Century and is designated, the exterior chimneys, it  
8 was designated as one of the earliest large farmhouses, even though it's only three bay, and then  
9 the son added on later in the 1850s, and then it was added on beyond that. So it's the multi-  
10 generational growth of the building back that's the L, and then as Mr. Pleasants indicated, the  
11 things that came in with the Farr's are from a different family, a different iteration, but the Pearre  
12 Family are, it's their adding on with generations.

13 MR. ROTENSTEIN: So the first floor of the 20th Century additions would be  
14 considered contributing to the building?

15 MS. CASH: Only, yes. They are.

16 MS. FOTHERGILL: They are until approximately 1948.

17

18 MS. O'MALLEY: So it would be that L.

19 MR. PLEASANTS: In keeping with history, we'd like to put another addition on  
20 it.

21 MR. ROTENSTEIN: I think the big question is where.

22 MS. O'MALLEY: I think that on first looking at this that the natural reaction is  
23 that, gosh, the addition is kind of competing with the house because it's so wide and tall. And so  
24 I'd almost look to see the addition come around behind more where you're taking down the later  
25 addition.

26 MR. PLEASANTS: Well, we are rebuilding where that addition, that existing

1 addition is now. We're rebuilding that area as well.

2 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Did you explore rebuilding a little more and not having the  
3 large addition coming off the side of the original block of the building?

4 MR. PLEASANTS: You mean as far as making it longer?

5 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Go back rather than out to the side.

6 MR. PLEASANTS: I did look at that, and I really can't get a configuration that  
7 makes a whole lot of living sense. And believe me, I've looked at this thing for going on five years  
8 now. And there are a lot of large trees on the property that we're also trying to save. And it makes  
9 it, it's difficult to figure it out and lay it out much differently than we have it here now. The first  
10 layout we had on this property, from reading the historic significance of the property and  
11 everything else, we thought that we would be able to tear everything off except the real old  
12 addition, including the part that was built in the 1900s, 1420, whenever that was.

13 And we were going to separate from that part and pull out in front of it and build a  
14 house. Staff advised us that that was not appropriate, and that we would have to save the portion  
15 that was built in 1920. And we've been trying to work with that since.

16 MS. O'MALLEY: So would there be a way to come out a little bit and then go  
17 into a courtyard space, or a U shape more at the back?

18 MR. PLEASANTS: I don't believe on the back we can do that. I have looked at  
19 that. Like I say, I've worked on this for several years trying to come up with different approaches.  
20 I've talked to two different architects about it. I've had one architect that drew up three different  
21 sets of plans on it, and just unfortunately we never got further than just the basic lay out and  
22 elevations.

23 MS. O'MALLEY: But they were ideas that you didn't care for?

24 MR. PLEASANTS: No, I did care for them. But staff didn't care for them. And  
25 the reason for that is that we were really looking to tear off all the house except that one portion  
26 and separate from that so that we could save that and then, you know, build, you know, basically

1 another house on the property there.

2 But without being able to separate, and with having to save all of that portion that  
3 was built, you know, through the 1920s, we'd need to be able to utilize that portion of the house  
4 rather than separating from it, and just having it sitting there. I mean I, it means nothing to me to  
5 have it just sitting there.

6 MS. O'MALLEY: Commissioner Burstyn.

7 MR. BURSTYN: Thank you. You put a thought in my head here. Since you  
8 mentioned that you did look at other portions of the entire tract, which is 224 acres.

9 MR. PLEASANTS: No, it's 1125 acres.

10 MR. BURSTYN: 1125, okay.

11 MR. PLEASANTS: So I got plenty of ground to build on.

12 MR. BURSTYN: Are there various sites that are acceptable to you to build an  
13 entirely new home on while at the same time preserving an acceptable environmental setting  
14 around the old house and preserving the old house to keep it, you could use it as a guest house and  
15 then pick a totally other area, possibly with it's own entrance road that goes into a totally new  
16 house. I don't know what other, what you would think of that.

17 MR. PLEASANTS: I thought exactly what you're saying. Staff has  
18 recommended that I separate and make it a guest house, but you know, I guess I got the same  
19 comment guest and fish, start to snow after about three days. And I don't want to make it --

20 MR. BURSTYN: I mean you can just preserve it for the county. I mean, you just  
21 make sure that it's preserved.

22 MR. PLEASANTS: Oh I could do that, but I really don't have a whole lot of  
23 financial incentive to do that.

24 MR. BURSTYN: Yeah, I mean, what we're concerned about is that the house  
25 does not deteriorate just from sitting.

26 MR. PLEASANTS: Oh, I understand that.

1 MR. BURSTYN: So that the outside is preserved.

2 MR. PLEASANTS: I know I've got to keep the house dry. But that's probably  
3 what I'll wind up doing if I, it's, I've got a tenant in it right now.

4 MR. BURSTYN: Because I would certainly like --

5 MR. PLEASANTS: But having the tenant in it, in the winter time they don't want  
6 to pay rent because of the fuel bill trying to keep that place heated. And you know, it just doesn't  
7 make economic sense for me to spend a lot of money on that property unless I'm going to be able  
8 to live on that site. And I think it would be a shame to, you know, not see these outbuildings  
9 restored. The outbuildings, in my opinion, have more historic significance than the house. The  
10 house the way it is now with the stucco on it and everything else, the only thing you've got are the  
11 bottom two thirds of the chimney that are original. The top portion, as you probably noticed, have  
12 been replaced with brick and fairly modern brick.

13 MR. BURSTYN: What's under the stucco, do you know?

14 MR. PLEASANTS: I think a portion of it has log under it. But I'm not sure of  
15 that. Just looking in the attic that's what it appears to be.

16 MS. CASH: It was framed. In the '50s it was framed.

17 MR. PLEASANTS: The whole section?

18 MS. CASH: Where it's stucco was left side.

19 MR. PLEASANTS: I think it may have log underneath the left side of the house.

20 MR. BURSTYN: So that's not your first choice to pick another site?

21 MR. PLEASANTS: No, my first choice is to build on this site. My second  
22 choice, you know, I have a site already picked out and already have a perk approved on it. My  
23 wife and I wanted to at least explore whether we were going to be able to build something on this  
24 site before we said, no, let's just go to another site and build somewhere else on the farm.

25 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Would it be economically viable for you to convert it to a  
26 permanent tenant house taking advantage of perhaps some of the tax credits available for you to do

1 some of the rehabilitation?

2 MR. PLEASANTS: I don't think it would. From what I've looked at on that  
3 house, it'll cost a whole lot more to renovate that house and get it to the point that it's liveable than  
4 it would to build a new house. I'm sure all of you are aware that it cost more to renovate more than  
5 it does to build a new one.

6 MS. O'MALLEY: Can you tell me on your, I'm still having a little bit of trouble  
7 with what you have sketched out here.

8 MR. PLEASANTS: That's because I'm not an architect. Can I walk up there.

9 MS. O'MALLEY: The only thing is you need to speak into one of these  
10 microphones when you talk. So you're showing this larger house, it's actually going to be set back  
11 behind, almost all of the part that you're preserving.

12 MR. PLEASANTS: Yes. If you look right here on the north elevation, this is the  
13 roof line right here for the new. And this dotted line coming down here represent the front and  
14 rear of that house. And this portion right here is the, where it projects out. This part right here.  
15 This is the existing piece that protruded to the north previously. And it does set back behind this  
16 portion of the house. This is the front of the old house here.

17 MS. O'MALLEY: And then this is another section off to the side. But are you  
18 not having anything then behind the original house where you're tearing down?

19 MR. PLEASANTS: What's behind the original house back this way --

20 MS. O'MALLEY: Beyond the 1920s addition.

21 MR. PLEASANTS: This portion right here --

22 MS. O'MALLEY: Right, that's the 1920s or teens.

23 MR. PLEASANTS: That portion is still there.

24 MS. O'MALLEY: Right. But you're tearing down all of that other portion.

25 MR. PLEASANTS: This portion here you'll see has got the metal windows and  
26 just really doesn't look very compatible. This we're tearing off and rebuilding that pretty much



1 entire section.

2 MS. O'MALLEY: So that's what this is represented on the north elevation?

3 MS. ANAHTAR: This is the actual photograph of that side that you're looking at.  
4 That side is this. So they're basically adding from the center of the structure out.

5 MR. PLEASANTS: That's correct.

6 MS. O'MALLEY: But also he's tearing down the section that's behind it and  
7 rebuilding that. But I don't see -- is that what this is?

8 MR. PLEASANTS: You see that little hatched area right here, that is the only  
9 additional piece that I'm putting on that part back there. And basically, just rebuilding this almost  
10 in the same configuration. Not exact, but almost the same.

11 MS. O'MALLEY: We look at page 10.

12 MR. FULLER: This is the original 1850s piece of the house, right?

13 MS. O'MALLEY: No, excuse me, page 11.

14 MR. PLEASANTS: All of this portion of the house, this is looking at the house  
15 from the south, from the back. All of this stays. This portion here, this is a screen porch, that  
16 basically stays. And this here all gets torn off and rebuilt to almost the exact same configuration.  
17 It won't have the double height here. It'll have another wing that goes across.

18 MS. O'MALLEY: That's what I'm wondering if there isn't a way that you can  
19 have your larger massing back there rather than competing so much with the front of the house.  
20 Because as you come up to the house what you want to stand out is the original house. And if you  
21 can go ahead and build something large but it have be more to the back, then it doesn't compete so  
22 much.

23 MR. ROTENSTEIN: I'm sure we're losing something, a perspective of the  
24 elevation drawings, but the Chair is conveying, and I think dove tails with the staff's position and  
25 other members of the commission that the addition you've provided us with a drawing of appears  
26 to make the original historic house to be a dependency to a much, much larger building.

1 MR. PLEASANTS: It is.

2 MS. O'MALLEY: But you want to disguise that fact.

3 MR. ROTENSTEIN: And the standards that we have to work within need to  
4 ensure that that historic house reads as the dominant feature in that landscape and the scale and the  
5 massing of the additions that you provided us drawings with are not compatible with the Secretary  
6 of Interior Standards or with the Montgomery County Guidelines.

7 MR. PLEASANTS: Well, I guess, that's really what I'm trying to determine.  
8 Because I really, I don't think I've got the option of bringing the scale down. Can I move it around  
9 some more, maybe. But I really don't think I'm going to be able to bring the scale down.

10 MS. O'MALLEY: Well, I think if you could move it around some more, then it  
11 won't be competing as you look at the front, as you come up to the house. Do we mind if Historic  
12 Medley comments?

13 MR. PLEASANTS: Sure.

14 MS. CASH: I think that the drawings are really doing a disservice to what they're  
15 trying to do. They don't really show the amount of change that the porches are going to create in  
16 the look. That if this front, that the main, the old section of the house can read as the formal part  
17 of the house and they can design the back section, although it's larger, it wouldn't be unreasonable  
18 to have it be larger if it's perspective is softened by both materials and the use of porches and such  
19 things.

20 I think these drawings don't show that. I'm not sure what the third piece is on the  
21 right, that end gable piece, that kind of diminishes the size of the big house. So that part I don't  
22 have an answer to. But I think the larger block could be modified as an ancillary part to the, even  
23 though it's bigger in size. Through the porches it can look like the back part of the house or a  
24 secondary house.

25 MS. O'MALLEY: Like it would have two story porches?

26 MS. CASH: Yeah, something like that. But they already have a one story porch

1 which right away is going to push it back away from the main house.

2 MR. PLEASANTS: Well that's really what I was trying to do with putting a  
3 porch on there was to bring down the, I guess, relevance of that portion of it and make it look more  
4 of a rustic look really.

5 MS. O'MALLEY: Other commissioners like to comment?

6 MS. ANAHTAR: I don't think these drawings are detailed enough for us to read.  
7 We do not have any floor plans, and we do not have all the elevations first of all. That is  
8 information, if I, as an architect, I don't think you're using your lot wisely. I mean, but you're not  
9 doing justice to your property by this design, this layout. Forget about the historic house. It is  
10 totally wrong from that perspective as well. That's my opinion.

11 MS. O'MALLEY: From an architect's point of view.

12 MR. PLEASANTS: Well, I had three other architectural plans that weren't liked  
13 either so.

14 MS. ANAHTAR: I think you need another architect for dealing with this type of  
15 buildings. Historic structures.

16 MR. BURSTYN: To add on that, and I'm not an architect, but when I look at the  
17 drawing on Circle 14, when I glance at this, and I guess this is all new part. It kind of reminds me  
18 of --

19 MR. PLEASANTS: No, 14 that's existing structure.

20 MR. BURSTYN: Oh, that's all existing.

21 MR. PLEASANTS: That's existing structure that I'm trying to tear down.

22 MR. BURSTYN: Oh, okay, then that's good. I was going to say it kind of looks  
23 '50 and '60s. Yeah, it does say existing right there at the top.

24 MS. O'MALLEY: The architects that you've been talking to are they familiar with  
25 historic properties?

26 MR. PLEASANTS: Yes.

1 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Are you going down the line?

2 MS. O'MALLEY: Yeah, would you like to, let's see.

3 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Commissioner Fleming.

4 MR. FLEMING: I've been sitting and listening to you speak and I was confused  
5 with a couple of things. First you said you didn't really like the place. Then you said --

6 MR. PLEASANTS: I didn't like the house. That's what I said.

7 MR. FLEMING: Right, the house, right.

8 MR. PLEASANTS: I love that portion of the property.

9 MR. FLEMING: This is where I'm confused. You said that you didn't like the  
10 structure, that's what I got.

11 MR. PLEASANTS: That's correct.

12 MR. FLEMING: Then you said you said you'd like to build on this site, and also  
13 I'd like to build on another site. So I'm trying to get to what you really want. Do you want to take  
14 this original house that you have here, and do you want it remodeled to what, to meet the specs of  
15 the historic preservation, is that what you're trying to get through?

16 MR. PLEASANTS: What I'm trying to say is, if I can build something that meets  
17 your requirements and as well meets my need, then I want to build on this site.

18 MR. FLEMING: When you say on this site?

19 MR. PLEASANTS: Right where this existing house is.

20 MR. FLEMING: This house. Okay.

21 MR. PLEASANTS: Has an addition to it. If I can't build something that meets  
22 your needs and meets my objectives, I'd like to make a decision and go ahead and move to a  
23 different location on the property and just build a house there.

24 MR. FLEMING: Okay, I understand.

25 MR. PLEASANTS: That's really what I'm looking to try to make a determination  
26 of.

1 MR. FLEMING: Then my suggestion, as the previous commissioner was saying,  
2 you could get the plans, even I'm not an architect neither, but it's kind of hard for us to make a  
3 determination of how we can help you, we can't efficiently work with these type plans that you  
4 have now. That's all I have to say.

5 MR. PLEASANTS: Let me ask, I guess, one more question and then I'll be quiet.  
6 The massing of the house, the size or the house, it's a large house. And the existing property it's  
7 probably adding, I'm probably adding 5,000 square feet on what's already there. There's probably  
8 6,000 or 7,000 feet there now. This is about a 12,000 square foot total house. And the big  
9 question I guess is, is that type of massing going to work with your guidelines?

10 MS. ANAHTAR: If it is nicely done, yes. The problem here is that it just doesn't  
11 work the way it is. You are not using an approvable attach of this historic house, and then  
12 building on that to get the nice house that you like to have. I think what is being proposed right  
13 now the way it is is not bringing it to the next level.

14 MS. O'MALLEY: What type of things would you think that he should be  
15 considering that would tie in better with the historic house?

16 MS. ANAHTAR: Well, I mean, massing, for example, demolishing that existing  
17 addition and then rebuilding it just doesn't make sense. It's not improving anything. It's just not  
18 going to look right. And then having the new addition in the back right in the middle with the  
19 facade as it is being proposed with the window configurations, just roof configuration, everything.

20 MR. PLEASANTS: It was not my original preference.

21 MS. ANAHTAR: I mean just the way it is competing with the existing house just  
22 doesn't look right. I can be the same size, it can be a little bigger if it is done right.

23 MS. O'MALLEY: You almost already have the origins of the second there with  
24 your gable toward the back.

25 MR. PLEASANTS: I guess I'm confused.

26 MS. O'MALLEY: The new one. I mean, if you had your, I wonder if you had

1 some kind of connector between the historic part and had your house also be cross gabled behind  
2 the addition, behind the 20s addition.

3 MS. ANAHTAR: I don't think we can redesign this for you tonight. But  
4 considering the lot size and all the land that you have here, and knowing what we're used to seeing  
5 in Chevy Chase in much smaller lots, there's successful projects, I don't see any reason for not you  
6 being able to do something similar, a successful project.

7 MR. PLEASANTS: One of the big difficulties that my architect and I have had is  
8 trying to figure out how to bring an entrance into this house and keep the old portion of the house  
9 as prominent portion. The entry is just not suitable for an entry. It's got low ceilings in there, there  
10 are low doorways going up through the hallway. The stairs are low. It just doesn't work.

11 MS. ANAHTAR: Yeah, well since we don't have the floor plans we cannot give  
12 you any ideas on that.

13 MR. PLEASANTS: Well, I certainly have floor plans for it, but I didn't realize  
14 that you'd be looking at floor plans.

15 MS. ANAHTAR: I'm also seeing that you're creating linear patterns again, and  
16 usually people like to build next to the existing house to double the size and get the space that they  
17 want. That's not what you're trying to do. I don't even know how your layout will work the way  
18 you're --

19 MR. PLEASANTS: Well the layout works very well, believe it or not.

20 MS. ANAHTAR: Linear like that?

21 MR. PLEASANTS: Believe it or not, the layout works very well. But the  
22 difficulty I've had in massing this house is the height that I get. The deeper I make the house of  
23 course the higher the roof gets. And that's the problem I've got here on this site. And that's why  
24 I've tried to make it linear to bring the roof height down. The house is only, this addition I'm  
25 putting on is only like 32 feet in depth which is pretty narrow. It is not efficient to build that way  
26 certainly. It functions the way we've got it laid out now.

1 MS. O'MALLEY: Now is it appropriate to do a type of style that has the roof  
2 come down so that the windows poke through the roof with little dormers across the front of the  
3 building?

4 MR. PLEASANTS: Yeah, I've looked at that.

5 MS. O'MALLEY: Not separate dormers.

6 MS. CASH: Colonial Revival.

7 MS. O'MALLEY: Yeah, Colonial, that wouldn't --

8 MR. PLEASANTS: I have looked at that.

9 MS. O'MALLEY: That's not appropriate for that.

10 MS. CHRISTIENSEN: You know, I think, if I may make a suggestion. I think  
11 we've spent almost 45 minutes on this, and I think it's clear at this point that the commission  
12 doesn't have the materials they need to really address this and be helpful. And that's what we're  
13 trying to do. We're trying to find a way that we can preserve the character and integrity of this  
14 building and still accommodate the needs of the owner. And could you get us some floors plans  
15 and just fax them to us.

16 MS. FOTHERGILL: Although I have to say that staff advised them to come for a  
17 preliminary consultation with what they had as a conceptual discussion. So I mean, I don't think  
18 they have floor plans.

19 MR. PLEASANTS: I do have floor plans.

20 MS. FOTHERGILL: Oh, you do.

21 MS. CHRISTIANSON: Well, it appears to me as a person sitting on the sidelines  
22 that the concept is probably not going to fly.

23 MR. FULLER: Since I can't make an official comment, but just an observer  
24 sitting on the outside, I heard the client, or the applicant make a comment that he was coming in  
25 more or less speaking to make a determination whether, I'll put it in other terms, is it going to be  
26 too painful to build at this location or to just go somewhere else on the property, and at least from

1 what I'm hearing, I'm hearing this, we're almost telling him, we'd just assume him go build  
2 somewhere else.

3 And I just think that the commission really ought to give a value judgment as to  
4 whether or not we really think that's the message we want him to go away with or not, or can we  
5 go to what he started to talk about a few minutes ago. He's proposing, he's got what, a 5,000  
6 square foot addition, do we think it's viable that there's going to be a solution that he can do a  
7 5,000 square foot addition and be able to make use of this part of the homestead.

8 MS. CHRISTIANSON: Well, we had one commissioner who said yes.

9 MR. FULLER: And I'm just saying, I think that's the question that I think the  
10 commission ought to be clear. Because otherwise, I'm afraid he's going to go build where it's  
11 painless.

12 MS. CHRISTIANSON: It's never painless.

13 MS. O'MALLEY: Well that would be, I think that would be useful to go down  
14 the line and have that information.

15 MR. PLEASANTS: That's really, I mean, very well spoken. That's exactly what  
16 I'm wanting to find out.

17 MS. O'MALLEY: Would you like to start Commissioner Rotenstein?

18 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Where to begin. Tough challenge. You do want to add a  
19 substantial amount to the historic building, and given my preferences, I think given the size of your  
20 farmstead, building somewhere else and finding some way to make the historic building  
21 economically viable to you so that you can have the lifestyle in the building that you want. If you  
22 have the opportunity to build elsewhere on the lot, I think that would be a good approach.

23 MR. FLEMING: Basically from what I heard tonight, and where the location is,  
24 I'm from the Up County, and if you could preserve this place, I'd like to see you do it.

25 MS. O'MALLEY: Well, that would be my thought. My thought is that if there's  
26 anyway you could possibly do it, I would want you to figure out a way to work your house into this



1 project so that this house is again used as the main homestead for the property.

2 MR. BURSTYN: I think it's a good idea that Commissioner Anahtar that possibly  
3 to drive through Chevy Chase, because there's been numerous homes have been added on, and you  
4 have to, I think, look at them very carefully because you don't really, they're done so well, that you  
5 have to realize that's not what was there before. And maybe it could give you all some more ideas  
6 as to how to approach this.

7 Obviously, whether you add on or pick another site, it has to be yours to make. I  
8 think it's very important, of course, to preserve a lot of the original structure. Not the '50 '60 stuff  
9 obviously. And that it be maintained over the years, so even a hundred years from now it's still  
10 part of Montgomery County history.

11 MS. ANAHTAR: I don't have anything to add.

12 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Madam Chair, may I make one more comment?

13 MS. O'MALLEY: Yes.

14 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Given the age of the property, one concern that comes to  
15 mind is the potential for archeological resources in proximity to the house. I can foresee the  
16 potential for pribees, evidence of other dependencies in proximity to the house.

17 I would be concerned about impacts to archeological resources were any major  
18 ground altering activities to take place, and would be interested in finding out what the potential is.  
19 I don't know if the Historic Preservation Commission's archeologist has been to the site or not, or  
20 if that's even possible to request an opinion about archeological potential.

21 MS. FOTHERGILL: We certainly could request that the staff archeologist go out.

22 MR. ROTENSTEIN: Just a concern since we do have to take account  
23 archeological resources.

24 MR. PLEASANTS: Well, I thank you for your input, and I think you've answered  
25 my question for me. Thank you.

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Mr. & Mrs. Nelson W. Tyler, Sr  
24900 Old Hundred Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

H: (301) 972-8508 W: (301) 972-8369 Ext.: 1 or 2  
W Fax: (301) 972-8563 & EM: Pat@Tylerco.com  
and/or NWTylerSr@AOL.com

April 10, 2007

The Maryland National Park and Planning Commission  
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Attention: Ms. Anne Fothergill, Historic Preservation Planner

Subject: 17700 Comus Road,  
Dickerson Post Office  
Comus, Maryland

Reference: Mr. & Mrs. Donald & Claudia Pleasants Preliminary Hearing  
scheduled for April 11, 2007.

Gentlemen:

We apologize for the delinquency of this communication. We respectfully request you take the following into consideration with regard to the referenced hearing.

We have known the Pleasants both personally and professionally for a goodly number of years. They are the kind of folks who want the best for all concerned. We are aware they have invested a great deal of time and money in an earnest effort to work through multiple alternate plans with all concerned to preserve and improve the existing historic structure on the subject property. They have a great deal of concern for preservation, as well as experience in the construction industry, and not only the knowledge, but the ware for all to meet the agreed upon criteria and maintain the property in an upstanding manner.

From our understanding of the Pleasants' intent, to renovate the existing structure to improve the internal traffic flow and upgrade the interior to accommodate their needs and that of a more modern life style than that for which it was originally designed, as well as construct a two story addition maintaining the original exterior historical integrity of both the existing and new structure, it would appear to us this embellishment will be an asset to the community. And inasmuch as the historical structure will remain in place and be improved in keeping with its original concept using appropriate materials, again, there should be no concern regarding loss of historic integrity. Almost all things historic require preservation. We believe the Pleasants' desire and design to preserve, enhance and extend the historical presence and concept of the existing house is of a very positive nature both historically and esthetically and will serve as a credit to all concerned.

**Maryland National Park and Planning Commission**  
**Attention: Ms. Anne Fothergill, Historic**  
**Preservation Planner**

**page 2 of 2**

**April 10, 2007**

**In closing I apologize for our inability to respond in a timely fashion. I hope inasmuch as you may have already reviewed the other correspondence relative to this matter you may be able to take a moment to give the this letter consideration. Thank you.**

**Sincerely,**

**Mr. & Mrs. Nelson W. Tyler, Sr.**

Case III-A

Gerald T. Connelly, III  
23200 Old Hundred Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842

April 03, 2007

Ms. Anne Fothergill, Historic Preservation Planner  
The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission  
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: 17700 Comus Road, Dickerson, Maryland

Dear Ms. Fothergill:

As a nearby resident of the old farmhouse at 17700 Comus Road, I have had the opportunity to walk by the existing structure many times. The house is in need of major renovation work and I think it is great that the Pleasants are looking to restore part of the historic structure as well as restore the log outbuildings and barn if their proposal is allowed.

I am also understanding of the fact that many older structures were not constructed to current building code requirements and often had floor plans which are unresponsive to the needs of modern living. I think the Pleasant's proposal to add a two story wing and renovate the remaining footprint of the existing structure is justified and a realistic use of the property. My understanding is they will be using materials such as stone, board, metal roof, etc. to reflect the character of the original structure and native building materials and that they will limiting disturbance to the nearby existing trees where possible.

I urge you to approve their proposal and am happy to answer any other questions you may have. As you know, having an owner vs. a tenant occupy the property is the best way to ensure its long term preservation.

Sincerely,



Gerald T. Connelly, III

Card III - A

**Fothergill, Anne**

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**From:** Lauren Pollin [lkpollin@intairnet.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 04, 2007 4:08 PM  
**To:** Fothergill, Anne  
**Subject:** Letter of support

Hello Anne,

I am writing in support of Don and Claudia Pleasants' application to renovate and add an addition to the existing farmhouse at 17700 Comus Road in Dickerson, MD. The Pleasants have worked through three alternate plans with staff over the last several years to preserve the historic portion of the structure, and complete a renovation and addition to make the property useable for them.

Sincerely,  
Lauren Pollin

Lauren Pollin  
Happy Choice Farm  
Barnesville, MD 20838

Case III - A

**Fothergill, Anne**

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**From:** SUGARBOS4@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 03, 2007 11:39 PM  
**To:** Fothergill, Anne  
**Cc:** CPleasants@pleasants.org  
**Subject:** Pleasants hearing before Mont. Co. Historic Preservation Commission April 11, 20

Dear Ms. Fothergill,

We are neighbors of the property in question and at one time considered purchasing it. Our interest and concern was limited due to the great deal of work that had to be done to the existing structure to make it a comfortable and updated living space. The original structure was built to a poor standard, creating a building that did not hold up to the vagaries of time. The additions that were added in the fifties were to accommodate family needs but not of historical value.

We support the request on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Pleasants to update and remodel the existing structure. We feel that the value of the property will be enhanced by a more environmentally efficient private residence. The Pleasant family has demonstrated their desire to support the local community and its history. We believe that the rejuvenated building of this structure would greatly enhance the the value of this community.

Sincerely,

Rainer and Beverley Bosselmann  
16715 Thurston Road  
Dickerson, MD 20842  
(301)428-8316

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See what's free at [AOL.com](http://AOL.com).

Fothergill, Anne

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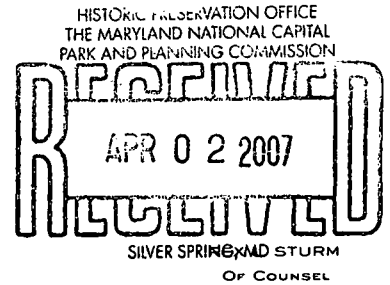
Subject: FW: PLEASANTS APPLICATION

>  
>-----Original Message-----  
>From: Loie Payne [mailto:bandlpayne@hotmail.com]  
>Sent: Monday, April 02, 2007 11:03 AM  
>To: Fothergill, Anne  
>Subject: PLEASANTS APPLICATION  
>  
>  
>THIS IS TO INFORM YOU THAT WE HAVE NO OBJECTIONS AND FULLY SUPPORT THE  
>PROPOSED RENOVATION BY DON AND CLAUDIA PLEASANTS FOR THE PROPERTY AT 17700  
>COMUS ROAD DICKERSON, MD.  
>  
>IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT ME.  
>  
Bob & Loie Payne  
23900 Barley Field Lane  
Dickerson Md 20842

LAW OFFICES  
**BROWN AND STURM**

260 EAST JEFFERSON STREET  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850-2333  
TELEPHONE (301) 762-2555 - TELECOPIER (301) 762-1928

R. EDWIN BROWN  
DENNIS M. ETTLIN



March 31, 2007

Ms. Anne Fothergill, Historic Preservation Planner  
The Maryland-National Capital Park  
& Planning Commission  
1109 Spring St, #801  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Fothergill:

Mrs. Brown and I reside at 19810 Peachtree Rd, Dickerson, MD in the heart of the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve. We have lived there for approximately 60 years in an old house built in 1910. As the crow flies, we are approximately 6 miles from the Farr property near Sugarloaf Mountain. If we could not, over the years, have remodeled, improved, and added to the structure, our situation would be intolerable.

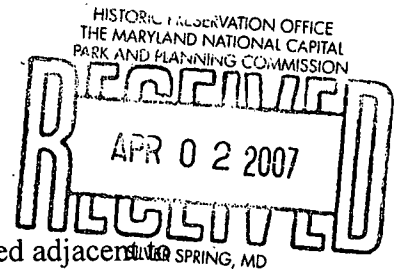
Mr. and Mrs. Pleasants purchased the property at 17700 Comus Rd, Dickerson, MD after Mr. Farr died. The Farr property contains approximately 1,100 acres. The bulk of the land is in reservation and must continue in agricultural use.

The Farr dwelling has very little to recommend it for modern living. Mr. and Mrs. Pleasants' application to extend and improve the structure in a historically pleasing manner with materials that blend with the present structure should most certainly be acted upon favorably and approved.

I don't know of any project that would better preserve the spirit and function of the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve than to permit these applicants to remodel and improve their dwelling in a historically pleasing manner. This will aid the continuing agricultural use of this enormous track of land.

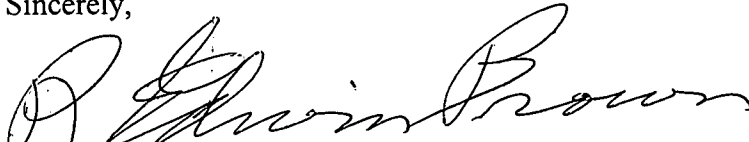
*[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]*





A remodeled and well cared for historically preserved country mansion located adjacent to Montgomery County's "country road to the Sugarloaf Mountain entrance" will be an improvement and asset to the mountain, the local community, Comus, and the entire area of Montgomery County adjacent to the Frederick County boundary line.

Sincerely,



R. Edwin Brown



**Comus Sky Farm**

March 29, 2007

Ms. Anne Fothergill  
Historic Preservation Planner  
The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission  
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910



Dear Ms. Fothergill,

My wife and I are adjacent landowners to the track of land known as Final Conclusion that is owned by Don and Claudia Pleasants. We are aware of their preliminary hearing on April 11, 2007, with the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and wish to express our support in their petition. Their continued efforts and expense while working through many alternate plans with staff over the last several years to preserve the historic portion of the structure, complete a renovation and addition to make the property useable for them is to be commended. As a landowner and resident of the Agriculture Reserve for fourteen years we can think of no other continuous track of undeveloped land that is more important for preservation as an asset to the County, the Reserve and its residents. The property, as an animal habitat, together with its undeveloped vistas, proximity to Sugarloaf Mountain and many other assets are a keystone to the spirit and intent of the Agriculture Reserve.

We, all of our neighbors and the other adjacent landowners support the Pleasants' proposed changes to the main residence on the property which reflect a requirement for modern living while preserving the character of the original structure, its native building materials and with minimal disruption to the original land. Their additional desire to restore the log outbuildings and barn, if the proposal is allowed, is the essence of preservation. All of us in the Agriculture Reserve take pride in our involved efforts to ensure responsible stewardship of the privilege we have been afforded. Through great expense and effort the landowners of the Reserve continue to endure the overwhelming pressures from outside development that would destroy this protected area for future generations.

Preservation needs to be viewed as a whole value. Absentee landowners serve the interests of no one. We request that the Commission afford the Pleasants every reasonable consideration in their attempt to live on, enjoy and preserve their investment to the benefit of us all.

We appreciate your consideration and efforts on behalf of the residents of the County and the Agriculture Reserve.

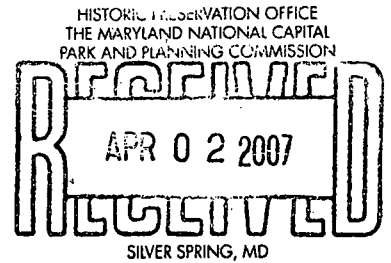
Respectfully yours,

Ronald L. & Juanita W. Breland  
Comus Sky Farm  
22900 Old Hundred Road  
Barnesville, Maryland 20838

*Walter H. Magruder, Jr.*

12165 Darnestown Road  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

March 28, 2007



Ms. Anne Fothergill  
Historic Preservation Planner  
The Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission  
1109 Spring Street, Suite 801  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Fothergill:

I am a close neighbor to the property owned by Mr. And Mrs. Don Pleasants at 17700 Comus Road, Dickerson, Maryland. I therefore have a very personal interest in what happens to their property.

I am a member of the Montgomery County Historical Society and a supporter of Heritage Montgomery. Obviously I have a keen interest and sensitivity to historic properties, especially rural farm properties.

From the description of their focus and how they plan to not only preserve the historic elements of the home but also make it conform to today's codes and life safety aspects I find particularly exciting.

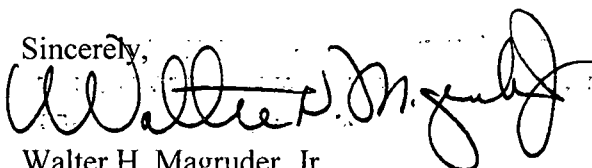
The notion of restoring and enhancing the home, and outbuildings, to include a beautiful bank barn and an ancient log structure is very important to our community.

Properties such as this one may eventually fall into disrepair and ultimately be lost forever if people who are willing and able are not permitted to have a somewhat free hand in their efforts.

I believe the Pleasants have every intention of restoring and improving this entire property to a degree that will make us all proud.

Please consider this request and allow them to proceed and keep alive a testament of a wonderful by gone era.

Sincerely,



Walter H. Magruder, Jr.  
23500 MT. EPHRAIM ROAD (Home Address)