



Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

HEARING DATE: March 8 at 1:00 PM

BILL NO: HB1140

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

POSITION: Letter of Information

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Elizabeth Hughes (410) 697-9556

TITLE: Port of Deposit State Historical Park – Included Areas

BILL ANALYSIS:

This bill, like its companion SB517, would make changes to legislation passed last session which mandated that the Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) transfer parts of the Bainbridge Naval Training Center including the historic Tome School property and the Snow Hill Archaeological Site to the Department of Natural Resources for use as "Port Deposit Historical Park."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The parcel owned and administered by BDC contains two historic properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Tome School for Boys Historic District (CE-1285) and the Snow Hill Archeological Site (18CE158). The Navy, who owned the property at that time as the former U.S. Bainbridge Naval Training Center, listed these historic properties in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

The Tome School for Boys Historic District is eligible for National Register listing under Criteria A and C as summarized in the following statement of significance from the nomination:

The Tome School for Boys possesses significance in national architectural, educational, and military history covering the period 1900 to 1974. The architectural significance of the school centers on the site plan and Beaux-Arts-influenced Georgian Revival style of the buildings designed by the firm of Boring and Tilton in 1900. This firm had just

received international recognition, winning the Gold Medal of the Paris Exposition of 1900 for its design of the U.S. Immigration Station, Ellis Island, New York. The architecture of Tome School embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Beaux-Arts movement which flourished from about 1890 to 1930. The monumental scale of the buildings, their symmetrical facades, the elaborate ornamentation derived from English Renaissance and American Colonial Revival sources, and the axial site plan are the main elements of the movement present in the Tome School. The School is significant in national educational history for its association with James Cameron Mackenzie, the planner of both the Tome School and the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey. The Lawrenceville School of 1882, upon which the Tome School plan was based, was the prototype of the non-sectarian college preparatory boarding school which proliferated in America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Finally, the Tome School is significant in military history as the location of the Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS) from 1943 to 1974, excepting the years 1949 to 1951.

The Snow Hill Archeological Site encompasses the remains of a free black community which was established in this area by the mid-1800s. The site is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion D, for its demonstrated potential to yield important information as summarized in the nomination's statement of significance:

This site possesses significance in the contexts of historical archeology, Black history, and Maryland history, covering a period from 1800 to 1900. The archeological significance of this site centers on the establishment of a Free Black Community spatially within a thriving white trading town prior to the Civil War and that remained intact until the end of the 19th century. Representative samples of Emancipated Black settlements or communities have not been identified and studied in this part of Maryland, or the eastern United States in general. The archeological record of this site can begin to illuminate much of the former lifeways of the Free Blacks in this community during the mid to late 19th century. The nature and distribution of artifactual material recorded in the archeological record in this site can provide invaluable information concerning economic, social, and settlement patterns and changes within and between this Free Black Community and the larger white population comprising Port Deposit during the 19th century. The historical significance of this site to Black History and Maryland History centers on the paucity of information known about Free Black settlement and lifeways in the eastern United States, and Maryland in particular.

MHT is unaware of any research suggesting that the Tome School was built on top of the Snow Hill Archeological Site. Both Martenet's Map of 1858 and the 1877 Atlas of Cecil show the community as located on either side of present day Route 222 (Bainbridge Road).

REQUIRED CONSULTATION WITH MHT:

Listing on the National Register alone does not place restrictions on the property owner, nor does it necessarily preserve a property in the future. When the Navy transferred the property out of federal ownership to the state/BDC in 2000 for future reuse and redevelopment, the transfer included the provision that a perpetual historic preservation easement held by MHT would be

placed on the National Register listed historic district and archeological site once they were conveyed out of state ownership. The easement would ensure the appropriate treatment and long-term preservation of these important historic resources for the benefit of the public. Since state acquisition, BDC and the Trust have handled the property as if it had an easement, though no successful redevelopment options or partners have emerged for the historic property.

Should this property transfer out of state ownership, then MHT would require conveyance of an historic preservation easement on the Snow Hill Archaeological Site. If the Snow Hill Archaeological Site were to transfer to the Department of Natural Resources and be developed as a state park, then MHT would consult with DNR, in the same way as it has consulted with BDC, regarding the treatment of this property as MHT cannot hold an easement on state owned property. In either scenario, the Snow Hill Archaeological Site would continue to be protected.

Due to the deterioration of the Tome School Historic District, conveyance of an historic preservation easement on this component of the property may not be desirable. MHT acknowledges the concerted efforts BDC has made over the last 20 years to stabilize and protect the historic resources, including varying levels of stabilization, fencing, and onsite security - with limited success. Many factors have contributed to the declining state of the district: the property's remote and isolated location, economic challenges in finding a partner for redevelopment of the historic complex, limited presence on the property to oversee security, lack of routine maintenance, and no active historic preservation plan for the district with clearly defined needs, priorities, and budget. The property has experienced numerous acts of vandalism and fire which resulted in substantive destruction of the district's contributing resources.

Transfer of the Tome School property outside of state ownership would require that MHT and BDC consult and develop practicable measures to avoid, satisfactorily reduce, or mitigate the adverse effect of losing state control of the property. These measures would be negotiated between MHT and the BDC, with input from identified stakeholders, called consulting parties, and formalized in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Possible consulting parties may include the Town of Port Deposit, Cecil County, the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Heritage Area, alumni groups, and other organizations with a defined interest in this historic property. Based on the consultation outcome, BDC and MHT would develop a MOA that stipulates the agreed-upon reasonable and achievable mitigation measures that BDC would commit to fund and implement, with a timeline for implementation. It would also allow for demolition of specified resources as funding becomes available, along with concerted efforts to market certain resources for adaptive reuse within a defined time frame. A range of possible mitigation measures for the property may include but are not limited to the following items:

- Preparation of thorough documentation on the Tome School for Boys Historic District - to include development of a detailed history and context for the Tome School, architectural recordation of the buildings and landscape elements, and updating the Trust's Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties records for the district – produced by a qualified cultural resource professional.
- Allowable demolition of certain buildings that have deteriorated past the point of economic reuse, after the documentation has been completed.

- Salvage of architectural elements and historic building materials from those buildings slated for demolition for reuse on site or resale through a non-profit salvage company.
- Development and implementation of an active stabilization and marketing plan for those remaining buildings that are still reusable - with a defined timeline and commitment to fund.
- Retention and enhancement of the cultural landscape and features within the historic district for public recreation and interpretation.
- Other defensible mitigation measures developed during the consultation process among BDC, MHT and pertinent consulting parties.

Should the Tome School Historic District transfer to the Department of Natural Resources and be developed as a state park, then MHT would consult with DNR, in the same way as it has consulted with BDC, regarding the treatment of this property as MHT cannot hold an easement on state owned property. In either scenario there is a process required by statute which will ensure that historic resources are considered and preserved to the fullest extent possible even if the property is transferred to a non-state entity.