The Prince George's County Historic Preservation Program

Introduction

The history of Prince George's County is embodied in its older buildings, structures, and archeological sites—in buildings remaining from eighteenth-century plantations, in nineteenth-century crossroad communities, in early-twentieth-century streetcar suburbs, and in those still-rural areas that recall the county's agricultural heritage of tobacco raising and horse breeding. From sites yielding prehistoric artifacts, to eighteenth-century dwellings, to historic properties: these resources help us to retain our sense of history and community. It is through the history embodied in everyday surroundings, the depth of these resources helps us to retain our sense of history and community. It is through the history embodied in everyday surroundings, the depth of these resources helps us to retain our sense of history and community. It is through the history embodied in everyday surroundings, the depth of these resources helps us to retain our sense of history and community. It is through the history embodied in everyday surroundings, the depth of these resources helps us to retain our sense of history and community.

The Historic Preservation Commission

The county's Historic Preservation Ordinance, enacted in 1981, established a nine-member Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Members of the HPC are appointed by the County Executive and are knowledgeable in such areas as architecture, planning, real estate, and historic preservation. The HPC reviews land use proposals affecting historic resources. HPC staff, provided by the M-NCPCC Planning Department, assist owners planning exterior alterations to historic buildings and respond to community survey and research requests. The Historic Preservation Commission meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at Prince George's County Administration Building in Upper Marlboro, unless otherwise announced. The public is encouraged to attend.

The Historic Area Work Permit Process

Changes to the exterior features of a historic site require a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) in addition to any other permits required by the county. Such changes include alterations, additions, demolition of exterior features, and grading work or landscaping that will affect the site. These changes to a property within a designated historic district (including new construction) require a HAWP. If alterations are planned for an unlisted historic resource included in the Historic Sites and Districts Plan inventory, a property owner should request a historic site evaluation. If, after that evaluation, a property is classified as a historic site, exterior work will require a HAWP. If the property does not meet the criteria to become a historic site, a HAWP will not be required. The HPC encourages owners to submit preliminary plans for its review before applying for a HAWP. Staff can provide technical assistance and information on financial incentive programs including tax credits and grant programs.

The Benefits of Preservation

Tax Credits and Grants

Historic site and historic district designation recognizes and protects the character of the designated property or area. Historic site owners are eligible to receive bronze plaques awarded by the HPC to place on their properties. In addition, owners may be eligible for a Prince George's County Preservation Tax Credit on county property taxes of ten percent of the cost of approved restoration work, or five percent of the cost of compatible new construction within a historic district. Owners may also qualify for preservation loan programs when such funds are available. Property owners are encouraged to contact staff and submit an application for tax credits prior to the commencement of work.

Architectural Styles

In cooperation with the Historic Preservation Commission, the Prince George's County Historic Property Grant Program was launched in 2008. Grants of up to $100,000 are available for the acquisition, rehabilitation, preservation and restoration of historic property in Prince George's County. All work must meet the standards of the Secretary of the Interior's standards, and grant recipients must place a perpetual historic preservation easement on the property before receiving grant funds. The grants are available to individuals, nonprofit organizations and incorporated municipalities.

Maryland state income tax credit of 20 percent of the qualified capital costs spent on rehabilitation for owner-occupied residential property and for commercial property can be taken by owners of (1) designated historic sites; (2) properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places; (3) contributing properties within historic districts listed in the National Register; or (4) contributing properties within county historic districts. The rehabilitation must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and must be certified by the Maryland Historical Trust prior to beginning work.

For information on eligibility for state and federal preservation tax credits and funding, contact the Maryland Historical Trust, 100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD 21032-2003, 410-314-7600, or consult www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net.

Prince George's County Archeology Review Process

The archeological component of the county's historic preservation program calls for a specialized approach to protecting resources. The ability to predict with reliability where archeological sites are located is an important goal of the county's program. In early 2004, thePrince George's County Planning Board issued an initiative to protect archeological sites during the development process. The Planning Board expressed particular interest in investigating the possible existence of slave quarters and graves, as well as archeological evidence of the presence of Native American peoples. In November 2005, the Prince George's County Council enacted legislation authorizing the Prince George's County Planning Board/M-NCPCC to require Phase I investigations as part of the subdivision application process to identify archeological sites within a property. County archeological guidelines were developed through the collaboration of Historic Preservation staff, professional archeologists, the Historic Preservation Commission, developers, real estate professionals, interested citizens, and other parties of concern. The results of the investigations have made substantial contributions to the understanding of the county's history, including slave life and the lives of Native Americans. These discoveries have also enabled the county to protect historic landscapes and sites that would otherwise be lost.

The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is a list of properties acknowledged by the U.S. Government as worthy of recognition and preservation. The National Register is maintained by the Secretary of the Interior and administered by the National Park Service. Properties listed in the National Register include buildings, sites, structures, and objects that are significant to the nation, the state, or to the local community. The National Register honors properties individually and within historic districts and provides recognition and serves as a planning tool. Listing in the National Register provides the following benefits in preserving historic properties:

- The prestige of national recognition that a property is of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and/or culture. Nomination involves a multistep review process that includes professional evaluations of the significance of the property.
- Consideration in the planning for federally and state-assisted projects. Procedures require careful consideration of any impacts on National Register properties by projects involving federal and state funds, licenses, permits, or tax benefits. There is no review for a project that uses private funds and does not require state or federal permits or licenses.
- Eligibility for federal income tax benefits that include (1) a 20 percent investment tax credit for certified rehabilitation of historic commercial, industrial, and residential buildings, and (2) a charitable donation deduction for the conveyance of a perpetual easement to a qualified preservation organization.
- Eligibility for a Maryland income tax credit of 20 percent of the qualified capital costs for approved rehabilitation of owner-occupied residential buildings and for commercial buildings.
- Eligibility to apply for federal and state grants and low-interest state loans for historic preservation projects.

National Historic Landmarks

The National Historic Landmarks program, another cultural resources program of the National Park Service, was established in 1960 to identify and protect places possessing exceptional significance in illustrating the nation's heritage. National Historic Landmarks can be buildings, sites, districts, structures or objects determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be nationally significant in American history and culture. National Historic Landmarks are eligible for special federal grants and for technical preservation advice from the National Park Service, as well as for the benefits listed above for National Register properties.

How to Get Involved

There are a number of nonprofit community organizations and government agencies active in location preservation efforts. Here are just a few:

- Prince George's County Historical and Cultural Trust (15 volunteers appointed by the County Executive), in conjunction with the HPC, has established a Countywide organization of volunteers, the Friends of Preservation, to support preservation efforts. The Friends of Preservation Newsletter, produced by the Historical and Cultural Trust, contains articles about preservation issues, the proceedings of the HPC, and information about preservation-related classes, tours and special events. Trust volunteers also run The Newel Post, a recycling center for salvaged architectural elements.

- For more information, contact 301-627-4499 or consult www.pgchbt.blogspot.com.

- The Prince George's County Historical Society and Library is a membership organization dedicated to promoting an appreciation of Prince George's County's heritage. Headquartered at the Greenbelt Branch of the Prince George's County Public Library, the society maintains a research collection on county history; publishes a monthly newsletter, News and Notes; holds programs and special events for members; conducts guided tours and educational activities for the public; and recognizes historical and preservation activities with annual awards.

- For information on Historical Society activities, contact 301-464-0590 or consult www.pgchistory.org.

- Prince George's Heritage, Inc., a countywide, nonprofit preservation organization staffed by volunteers, administers the Prince George's Heritage grants program and can award small grants for research and restoration projects. Prince George's Heritage works closely with the Historic Preservation Commission in education efforts.

- For more information, call Doug McElrath, Chair, 301-405-9210 or dmcelrat@umd.edu.

- The M-NCPCC Natural and Historical Resources Division (Department of Parks and Recreation) offers interpretive programs at M-NCPCC-owned historic sites and a range of volunteer opportunities. The department also operates a curatorship program that allows individuals interested in rehabilitating historic properties to enter into long-term lease agreements.

- For more information, call 301-218-8520, or consult wwwpgarchcom/places/historic sites.html

This brochure was prepared by the Historic Preservation Section, Countywide Planning Division of the Prince George's County Planning Department/M-NCPPC. For more information, contact the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission, c/o M-NCPCC, County Administration Building, 14743 Governor Oden Brook Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772, or call 301-218-8530, or consult www.mncppc.org/county/hpc.htm.