



Maryland's

# HISTORIC DISTRICTS

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## SMALL COMMERCIAL TAX CREDIT LAUNCHED

By Melissa Archer, Preservation Officer,  
Maryland Historical Trust

In April 2014 the General Assembly reauthorized Maryland's popular historic rehabilitation tax credit program for an additional three years. This reauthorization is noteworthy because it expanded the program to include a new groundbreaking small commercial tax credit category.

The small commercial tax credit is intended to assist commercial property owners with small-scale rehabilitation projects like roof replacement, painting, window restoration, etc. Previously, small-scale adaptive reuse and ongoing maintenance projects could not take advantage of historic tax incentives due to the high expenditure thresholds of both the federal and state commercial tax credit programs. Now small business owners will be eligible for the same tax incentives as homeowners.

Like the homeowner program, small commercial applications will be accepted year round on a first come, first served basis and will be limited to a credit capped at \$50,000 per project. To qualify, projects must be under \$500,000 and properties

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## NEW TRAINING WORKSHOPS FROM MAHDC

New commission training sessions on ethics and defensive decision making, sustainability, and Maryland modernism, funded by a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from the Maryland Historical Trust, are now ready! Contact [Melanie Lytle](#) if you'd like to schedule one for your commission.

### ETHICS AND DEFENSIBLE DECISION MAKING FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSIONS

Following the rule of law alone is not always sufficient to ensure that a historic preservation commission's actions are orderly, fair, and impartial, which is why policies and procedures must be underpinned by commissioners' high ethical standards. Historic preservation commissions, as an arm of the local government, have authority to protect the community's historic resources. Commissioners are therefore public servants who have the responsibility to act in an ethical and legal manner on the public's behalf. It's not always clear what may be appropriate, though, especially when it comes to some common dilemmas all public servants face related to bias, ex parte communication, and conflicts of interest. This tutorial discusses approaches and strategies for commissioners to deal with the ethical dilemmas they face as historic preservation commissioners and presents the elements of defensive decision-making, so that commissions can effectively protect their community's historic resources.

At the end of the training module, the participants will be able to:

- Define the various ethical concerns that create legal vulnerabilities for commissioners
- Explain due process and apply the elements of a defensible decision
- Recognize, analyze, and apply ethical standards when facing pressure to be unethical

### MODERNISM FOR MARYLAND'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSIONS

In Maryland, especially in the smaller communities where mid-twentieth century construction is found as in-fill or on the outskirts, we often fail to appreciate our mid-twentieth century modern built environment. Yet these resources represent not only a boom time in American building and architecture, but also the stories of the generations who lived through our modern century—from the World Wars to the computer age. It is vital that we acknowledge the significance of these properties and do what we can to preserve them, or we risk making the same mistake that those who came before us did with Victorian architecture and then Art Deco-style buildings. Commissioners are often the most educated individuals in their community regarding the built environment, and it is their role to alert their historic district residents, elected officials, media, and others of the value of Maryland's modernism.

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Providing advocacy, training,  
and program support for  
Maryland's Historic Preservation  
Commissions and local  
governments.

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## New Training Workshops from MAHDC (Continued from page 1)

At the end of the training module, the participants will be able to:

- summarize the mid-century built environment historic context in Maryland
- defend the preservation of mid-century resources in their communities
- actively promote preservation of the period's resources using a variety of strategies

### SUSTAINABILITY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSIONS

Preservation is an inherently sustainable act, especially when viewed within the broader context of social, ecological, and economic sustainability, often referred to as the "Triple Bottom Line." Historic structures were typically designed for low-energy environments, as energy was frequently expensive and difficult to procure. The choice to renovate/repurpose existing structures instead of demolition and new construction can have a significant positive environmental impact. Further, the history and density of traditional communities contributes to positive environmental and social impact.

Every decision a commission decides must be a sustainable one. If commissions do not consider sustainability when making decisions, they are undermining a fundamental principle of preservation: to protect our past and preserve our future. The subject of sustainability in the context of preservation cannot be ignored. Commissions must incorporate sustainability principles into design review decisions and actively assist historic building owners to find ways to make their properties more energy efficient. Overlooking these issues will be to everyone's detriment – both in the loss of older buildings and in a failure to lower harmful carbon emissions overall.

At the end of the training module, the participants will be able to:

- Describe commissions' role in promoting sustainability
- Apply the four Energy-Efficiency Strategy steps to several case studies
- Develop a strategy for incorporating sustainability principles into commission decisions

## Commercial Tax Credit (Continued from page 1)

must be certified as historic and be located within a designated Sustainable Community. The Maryland Historical Trust will begin certifying small commercial applications after January 1, 2015 until the program appropriation of \$4 million is reached.

The Trust needs your help to spread the word about this exciting new program. Are there small commercial properties in your historic district that could use a facelift? Perhaps a property owner has deferred maintenance or is considering cost-saving measures to the detriment of the historic building. With the assistance of tax credits, property owners are more inclined to undertake high-quality preservation work that meets historic standards and guidelines. Also, for jurisdictions that have a local tax credit, the impact of the local tax credit can be amplified when paired with the state tax credit.

Small commercial properties are crucial to preserving the historic character of Maryland's historic Main Streets and we need to encourage owners of these properties to invest in maintenance and reuse of underutilized spaces. It is our hope that this new tax credit will help revitalize commercial storefronts in every county of the state.

In order to raise awareness of the new small commercial tax credit and renew interest in the homeowner and competitive commercial tax credits, the Trust is planning a series of tax credit workshops across the state. If you have questions about the program or are interested in collaborating and hosting an event, please contact [Melissa Archer](#). You can also find details about the program and access fact sheets on our [website](#).



## 2014 ANNUAL MEETING & 35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



## 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

2014 has been a year of growth for MAHDC. We continued to fulfill our mission to provide advocacy, training and program support to our long-term commission members. We also sought out individuals who were committed to our mission to become Associate members and, as a result, we welcomed many new supporters into our membership this year.

### TRAINING PROVIDED TO COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

We believe that education is the foundation of a strong historic preservation commission. Not only must commissioners be equipped to fulfill their statutory roles in a responsive and sensitive way, they must also provide leadership for the historic preservation movement at the local level, as they have done over the last fifty years. This requires commissioners to possess a depth of knowledge that enables them to explain to others the importance of heritage preservation. Moreover, as the field of historic preservation is always evolving, commission members must constantly pursue educational opportunities that enable them to continue to fulfill their duties faithfully and capably.

Over the year, we brought six workshops to Maryland's preservation commissions. Over 85 individuals learned about Design Review, Law and Procedures, and Connecting with Your Community. The workshops were offered in Baltimore County, Cambridge, Port Deposit, Gaithersburg, Montgomery County, and Calvert County.

### DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TRAINING MODULES

In mid-2014, we began developing three new training modules with funding through a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from the Maryland Historical Trust. The three new training modules supplement our existing training curriculum by providing important training on current topics relevant to our commissions. They include *Ethics and Defensible Decision Making for Historic Preservation Commissions*, *Modernism for Maryland's Historic Preservation Commissions*, and *Sustainability for Historic Preservation Commissions* and are now available to schedule for our commissions.

We also brought a training workshop that we had offered in the past into our permanent course offerings: *Connecting with Your Community: Communication, Education and Outreach*.

### LAUNCH OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSULTANT DIRECTORY

As a service to our commission community and preservation partners in Maryland, we were pleased to announce the launch of our new Historic Preservation Consultant Directory this spring. We're just getting started, and we expect the list to grow in a big way over the next few months.

### NETWORKING AND LEARNING AT SOCIAL HOURS

Part of our identity and service to commissions is the availability of networking opportunities. To this end, we continued to host quarterly regional social hours in 2014. We held three social hours this year, the first in Baltimore at the historic Union Mill, another at the National Park Service Historic Preservation Training Center and Frederick Visitor Center in the winter, and a modernism-themed gathering this spring in Carderock Springs in Montgomery County. These meetings were informal and attracted commissioners from neighboring communities to encourage networking and exchange of ideas.

### ADVOCATING FOR PRESERVATION

MAHDC staff sat on the Maryland Heritage Council this year and helped establish the legislative agenda for the 2014 session. We rallied our membership behind the successful renewal of the improved Sustainable Communities Tax Credit program early this year. We also advocated at the local level, supporting our commissions in Frederick City and Prince George's County who were struggling with political demands on their decisions.



# From the Field: Experiences with City-wide Demolition Review Ordinances as a Tool for Protecting Historic Resources in Frederick

By Lisa Mroszczyk Murphy, MAHDC Board of Directors and Historic Preservation Planner, City of Frederick



Park Hall



Coca-Cola Bottling Plant



Conley Farm



Shaver/Johnson Farm

In 2012 Park Hall, a c. 1840 brick manor house with Greek Revival and Gothic Revival influences along the historic National Road, was demolished. The property was not locally designated but had been identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan as being eligible. Many in the community were shocked by the unexpected demolition of Park Hall; however, even if proper permits had been obtained there would have been no opportunity during that process for the community to become informed about the pending loss of a historic building it greatly valued. Shortly thereafter, Alderman Kelly Russell and Alderman Michael O'Connor led a proposal to implement a city-wide demolition review ordinance.

The demolition review ordinance was adopted in 2013 with the goal of ensuring that potentially significant undesignated historic resources are not demolished without notice to the community and the opportunity to be protected if appropriate. The structure must be fifty years old or older or of unknown age to be subject to the review which is triggered by the submission of a sketch plan, minor site plan, or demolition/building permit that depicts demolition work. Owners may also apply for review at their own request. If the Historic Preservation Commission recommends a structure for designation as a result of demolition review, the permit or plan is on hold until the designation process is completed and the Mayor and Board of Aldermen have made their final decision.

Since the ordinance was adopted, twenty-one requests for demolition review have been submitted. Of those, fifteen were for structures fifty years old or older. The Historic Preservation Commission only recommended three of the fifteen for designation. The first was the 1947 Art Deco Coca-Cola Bottling Plant. Although this property was previously identified as eligible in the Comprehensive Plan, the Aldermen voted not to designate it. Therefore, it can be demolished any time in the following five years without further review. The second property was the Conley Farm which includes a stone house, smokehouse, and outbuildings dating from c. 1800; a tenant house, wagon shed, workshop, carriage house, and stable dating from the late nineteenth-century; and a dairy barn, milk house, and silo from c. 1925. This property was also identified in the Comprehensive Plan and ultimately the Aldermen voted to designate it as the second individual landmark in the City. The structures will now be incorporated into a new residential development. The third designation application is currently pending for the Shaver/Johnson Farm which includes a c. 1886 farmhouse and structures from the twentieth century dairy farming operations.

Ideally, applications to designate historic landmarks and districts should not only be made in response to the imminent threat of demolition but staffing and funding for survey, research, and outreach do not always support a more proactive approach. While design guidelines are improved; survey, research, and documentation are undertaken; financial incentives for designation are implemented; and outreach and education provided to property owners, demolition review is a tool that provides some interim protection and opportunities for meaningful public input.



## UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### ■ COMMISSION ASSISTANCE AND MENTORING PROGRAM (CAMP) NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PRESERVATION COMMISSIONS (NAPC) AND CUMBERLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION CUMBERLAND, MD

**OCTOBER 17, 2014**

The Cumberland Historic Preservation Commission is hosting NAPC's CAMP in a full-day session this October. The agenda includes topics such as meeting procedures; building support; standards, guidelines, and new materials for design review boards; survey and designation; preservation planning 101; and a Skype meeting with Buffalo preservationists.

### ■ GIS: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR CULTURAL RESOURCE PROJECTS ASSOCIATION FOR PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGY RICHMOND, VA

**OCTOBER 21-22, 2014 or OCTOBER 23-24, 2014**

This two-day class reviews introductory GIS concepts and teaches participants how to use GIS applications for identification, evaluation, protection, and preservation of cultural resources.

### ■ VIRGINIA'S "UNCLAIMED" CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELDS—A PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITY, A PRESERVATION CHALLENGE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES PETERSBURG, VA

**OCTOBER 23-24, 2014**

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources workshop is open to any citizen, organization, or jurisdiction interested in taking meaningful action to preserve, interpret and promote Civil War battlefields in their communities and region.

### ■ PAST FORWARD: 2014 NATIONAL PRESERVATION CONFERENCE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION SAVANNAH, GA (*virtual attendance will also be available*)

**NOVEMBER 11-14, 2014**

This year's National Preservation Conference returns to Savannah for the third time, but with many changes planned, including the opportunity to attend the conference virtually (online), TrustLive (a live-streamed forum focusing on the intersections between preservation and other issues), learning labs, field studies, the Preservation Studio, and day-long, skill-building workshops.

### ■ SECTION 106: AGREEMENT DOCUMENTS NATIONAL PRESERVATION INSTITUTE MOUNT VERNON, VA **NOVEMBER 17-19, 2014**

The advanced seminar focuses on memoranda of agreement and programmatic agreements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Learn how to survive and thrive during the agreement process through careful analysis, clear writing, and good negotiation.

## ■ CALENDAR

**October 17, 2014**  
**Commission Assistance and  
Mentoring Program (CAMP)**  
Cumberland, MD

**October 21-22 or  
23-24, 2014**  
**GIS: Practical Applications  
for Cultural Resource Projects**  
Richmond, VA

**October 23-24, 2014**  
**Virginia's "Unclaimed"  
Civil War Battlefields—A  
Preservation Opportunity, A  
Preservation Challenge**  
Petersburg, VA

**November 11-14, 2014**  
**Past Forward: 2014 National  
Preservation Conference**  
Savannah, GA and Online

**November 17-19, 2014**  
**Section 106: Agreement  
Documents**  
Mount Vernon, VA





## NEWS FROM THE COMMISSIONS

Have you visited [mahdc.org](http://mahdc.org) recently? Here are some of the news items you may have missed:

- Hyattsville Flying Saucer to be saved
- Frederick City Seeks Interested Individuals to Serve on HPC
- New Director Appointed to Baltimore's CHAP

Please share your commission's news with MAHDC by emailing Melanie Lytle at [director@mahdc.org](mailto:director@mahdc.org).

## THANK YOU, RENEWING MAHDC ASSOCIATES

- Richard Arkin

## WELCOME, NEW MAHDC ASSOCIATES

- Catherine Adams Masek

Thank you for your support. If you have not yet become an MAHDC Associate, please join today.



## MAHDC HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSULTANT DIRECTORY

We need your help to grow our new [Historic Preservation Consultant Directory](#). We are searching for all types of historic preservation specialists, but especially craftspeople that can help our historic district residents repair and maintain their properties. Do you know of a skilled mason, building contractor, engineer, carpenter, plasterer, or window conservator? Forward this newsletter on to them and tell them about the benefits of an MAHDC Business Associate membership, which includes listing in our online directory and access to our statewide membership. They can [complete the application](#) on our website to join MAHDC as a Business Associate for just \$30 (for a limited time; normally \$50 per year). We ask that they read and agree to abide by our [Directory Policies](#).

## WELCOME TO THE NEW DIRECTORS

At our annual meeting on October 9th, the membership elected five new directors to serve on the Board of Directors. Welcome, Sheila Bashiri, Melissa Holo, Charles (Chris) Kirtz, Kathy McKenney, and Patricia (Tish) Weichmann-Morris. They are joining the renewing directors Frederick Stachura (President), Sharon Kennedy (Vice President of Operations), G. Bernard (Bernie) Callan (Secretary/Treasurer and Vice President of Finance), Tom Liebel, Lisa Mroszczyk Murphy, Joshua Silver, and Kirsti Uunila.



MAHDC depends on the support of our members, dedicated commissioners and individuals who understand that preservation, at its most vibrant and compelling, takes place locally.

### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Access to the MAHDC training programs at the discounted membership rates
- Subscription to MAHDC's timely e-newsletter
- Participation in a professional network of historic preservation commissioners, preservation professionals, and grassroots activists
- Influence in advocating for responsible government decisions affecting historic resources

**PLEASE JOIN US!** The membership application and payment can now be completed [online](#).



### JOIN US ON FACEBOOK & TWITTER

Please "like" us on our [Facebook page](#) and follow our [Twitter feed](#) (@mahdcorg) for timely policy updates, news, and training opportunities.

