



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION ON THE MAERLENDER-HUGHES HOUSE (DOCUMENTED PROPERTY 66-037-51) AND ITS ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING FOR CLASSIFICATION AS A HISTORIC SITE

April 16, 2025

Procedural Background

January 9, 2025	The owner submitted an Application for Historic Site Evaluation in compliance with Subtitle 29-120.01. The property is not listed in the Inventory of Historic Resources.
February 12, 2025	The property owner and the adjacent property owners were mailed 60-day written notice of the time, date, and location of the public hearing (Subtitle 29-120.01).
March 2025	The survey and documentation of the property were completed by Tyler Smith.
March 31, 2025	The property was posted "at least 14 days in advance," according to the provisions of the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Ordinance (Subtitle 29-120.01) and the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance (Subtitle 27-125.03). Evidence of sign posting and written notice to the property owner are attached.
April 15, 2025	Date of HPC public hearing.

Findings

Summary Architectural Description

The Maerlender-Hughes House, at 4615 Clemson Road, College Park, is a c.1946/7 two-story Colonial Revival dwelling. The house comprises a simple two-story rectangular block clad in unpainted brick with an asphalt shingle side-gable roof. There is single-story frame sunroom wing off the west elevation and two-story frame rear addition, built c. 1990. Both the sunroom and the rear addition are clad in horizontal composition-board siding. The house retains its original 8/8 double hung wood sash windows.

North Elevation

The north elevation of the house faces Clemson Road. The symmetrical façade features two windows per story with a brick walk and brick stairs leading up to a classical entry portico. The front door surround has a simple decorative crown and pilasters. The door is sheltered by a small gable roofed portico supported by columns with an open pediment and curved beadboard underside. The brick stairs have metal railings painted black on either side. The first story windows are flanked by fixed shutters. The two second story windows are set into engaged gable-roofed dormers.

West Elevation

The west elevation is defined by an original or early addition of a single-story shed roofed sunroom, above which projects an exterior brick chimney. The sunroom features a brick foundation, 8/8 double hung wood sash windows in adjacent pairs, and is sided with horizontal composite board siding. There is an exterior entrance on the south side of the sunroom with brick stairs leading to the back patio. The sunroom surrounds the exterior brick chimney which is flanked by two second story wood windows. The chimney terminates in a flush soldier course of brick and is otherwise unornamented.

East Elevation

The east elevation includes both the original 1940s block and the 1990s addition. The main block has a one-story bay window on the first floor in the north bay and a single 8/8 double hung window in the south bay. The one-story bay window includes white horizontal siding below the windows and a small three-sided shingled roof. The second story has two 8/8 double hung wood windows. The gable has a single 4/4 double hung wood window.

South Elevation

The south elevation has been modified by a large-scale rear addition to the original dwelling. The 1940s main block retains its west engaged second story dormer, first floor west eight-over-eight window and smaller six-over-six first floor window in the center bay, and two two-light basement story casement windows.

The 1990 two-story gable roofed addition extends from the east side of the rear of the house. The east elevation of the addition includes a covered side entrance and a single double-hung window on the first floor. A row of rectangular skylights pierces the east slope of the roof. The south gable end elevation of the addition includes a gang of three six-over-six simulated divided light windows on the first and second floors. The second-floor gang of windows is topped with a single pane, irregularly shaped transom window extending to the top of the gable. The west elevation of the addition contains first-floor double doors leading to a small entry deck and steps onto the rear patio. The west elevation also has a lower-level entrance accessed by stairs leading down from the patio. The most unusual feature of the addition is the inclusion of a cantilevered turret incorporated into the second story interior corner created by the original building and west elevation of the addition. Within the turret, there is an exterior door which was planned to open onto a second story deck or entrance which was never built.

The rear addition and patio activate the fenced and partially shaded outdoor space in the rear of the house which contains a low brick barbeque and noncontributing gable roofed shed.

Setting

The Maerlender-Hughes House is within the Calvert Hills National Register Historic District. The residential community is nestled between Baltimore Avenue to the west and the WMATA Metrorail/B&O Railroad right-of-way to the east. The Maerlender-Hughes House sits on the south side of Clemson Road facing north. The house retains its historic function as a single-family residence. The property comprises 0.148 acres and includes the house, front lawn, and fenced backyard. The front of the house is accessed by a narrow asphalt drive and brick entry walkway. The backyard has a large concrete patio. There is a single noncontributing outbuilding in the southeast corner of the rear yard. The property is surrounded by other single-family residences and the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail bike trail passes to the east.

Historic Context

Calvert Hills is an excellent illustration of the residential development on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., in the early twentieth century. The once rural property, historically part of the Calvert family's Rossborough Farm and Riversdale Plantation, was subdivided in response to the expanding suburban population, the development of the nearby Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland at College Park), and the College Park Airport. The middle and upper middle class suburban community framed by major transportation corridors developed further with the advent of the streetcar and automobile. The neighborhood was conceived as a series of additions to the growing subdivision of College Park, which was located to the immediate north of Calvert Hills. The first of the 11 additions, "Fanny A. Calvert's Addition to College Park," was undertaken by the Calvert family in response to many speculative development opportunities. In 1945,

the many additions to College Park were joined as the neighborhood of Calvert Hills in recognition of the prominent Calvert family and incorporated as part of the City of College Park.

The tract of land that contains the subdivision in which the subject property is located, known as Lot 3 of the Charles B. Calvert Estate, was sold out of the Calvert family in 1891 and changed hands several times over the next thirty years. In October 1927, Calvert Manor Realty Corporation conveyed Lot 3 to its subsidiary, the College Park Corporation. The president of the latter entity was Harry C. “Curley” Byrd, who at the time was vice president of the University of Maryland and its controversial longtime football coach. The College Park Corporation platted an approximately 40-acre subdivision, Section A, College Park, in March 1927. When the subdivision was platted Clemson Road was called Woodland Street. Development occurred at a moderate pace until 1935, when the College Park Building Corporation purchased 160 of the undeveloped lots.

Influenced by the availability of aid from the Federal Housing Administration, Robert M. Watkins and Omar D. Crothers, Jr., formed the College Park Building Corporation in 1935. In the 1930s, Crothers was a lawyer with offices in Baltimore. He later served as a state senator from 1951 through 1954. Little information, however, exists on Robert M. Watkins. The 1948 Washington D.C., city directory listed him as a mover for the Public Buildings Administration. Oral information suggests that Watkins was primarily responsible for development completed by the College Park Building Corporation, as it was Watkins who hired local architect R. Webster Ross to design some of the houses in the neighborhood. Ross, a native of Baltimore, received his architectural training at the Architectural School of the Maryland Institute, later forming Ross and Walton, a prolific architectural firm in Prince George’s County.

The Calvert Hills National Register form characterizes 1940-1948 as a period of infill development. The Colonial Revival style was the dominant style for domestic building throughout the country during the first half of the twentieth century and continued through the 1940s as the most popular architectural style in the Calvert Hills community. Abstracted elements of the Colonial Revival style ornamented most dwellings constructed in Calvert Hills between 1940 and 1948. The style is expressed through a range of two-story building forms, including the central passage of which the Maerlender-Hughes House is an excellent example.

William and Marie K. Maerlender 1947-1956

William and Marie Maerlender were the first occupants of the house, purchasing it from the College Park Building Corporation in 1947. William Hugo Maerlender was from New York and attended Hempstead High School and Clarkson College of Technology in Potsdam, N.Y. Marie Kiefe Maerlender from Philadelphia and had attended Germantown High School in Philadelphia and Coleman’s School of Business in Newark. William Maerlender and Marie Kiefe were married in New York. William had previously worked for the Eastern Light Company in Northampton, Pennsylvania. At the time of the 1950 Census, they were living at 4615 Clemson Road. William was a heating and refrigerating engineer in the wholesale building supply air conditioning industry and Marie Maerlender was listed as keeping house. At that time, the Maerlenders had two children, Elain and William, aged 6 and 7. Interestingly three lodgers, maybe students, were also listed with the family; James Neikirk, Donald Reilly and Edward W. Whiteford, all 18 years old and from different states. The Maerlenders owned the house until 1956.

George B. and Louise S. Hughes 1956-1980

George and Louise Hughes purchased the property in 1956. Both George and Louise grew up in the Ammendale/Beltsville area. George’s father, also George B. Hughes, was an electrician for the Government Printing Office for 35 years and lived in Ammendale for approximately 30 years. Louise Sellman Hughes was raised in the Sellman House (Historic Site 61-012), an American Foursquare House built by her father

Robert Sellman and his brother. The Sellmans sold the 290-acre farm for the establishment of the Plant Research Station now Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) in the 1930s. The census recorded that Louise Sellman attended a four year college, likely the University of Maryland. George Hughes earned a Bachelor of Science from the College of Agriculture and was appointed as a Dairy Plant Manager at the University of Maryland in 1929. Material from the University records a few details of his employment including his appointment as an Assistant Professor of Dairy Manufacturing in 1936 and a cheese making course he taught in 1939. Census records indicate George and Louise S. Hughes were married by 1940. George Hughes' World War II Registration Card indicates that he was a large man at 5'11" weighting 226 lbs. He was employed by the university until 1944 when he resigned his positions. The 1950 Census records the family living in Vansville where George Hughes was working as a milk plant manager and Louise Hughes keeping house. The 1950 Census records the family including two children and Louise's parents Robert L. and Edith S. Sellman. George and Louise's children, Barbara and Robert B., were 15 and 12 years old at the time the Census was recorded. Records indicate that George and Louise Hughes continued to live in the Beltsville area and did not purchase the house in Calvert Hills until 1956. Not much is known about them during their ownership of 4615 Clemson Road. Louise Hughes passed away on October 13, 1979. At the time of her death, they had six grandchildren. The house in Calvert Hills was sold the following year in 1980 and George Hughes died in 1982.

Elizabeth Lee McFerren Fulton 1980-1984

Elizabeth McFerren was born in 1936 to a large family including at least four siblings, William, Jean, Gerald, and Marilyn. She attended Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring and was an honors graduate of the University of Maryland. She married Lt. Stanley E. Fulton in 1953 at St. John's Catholic Church in Forest Glen. They lived temporarily at Hunter Air Force Base before moving to Nevada. Elizabeth and Stanley divorced in 1978. She owned 4615 Clemson Road for only four years from 1980 to 1984, after which she moved to northern Virginia. Elizabeth Fulton died March 5, 2017.

Kim and Shaye Sims 1984-1987

The Sims were married in June of 1980 in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Kim Edgar Sims attended Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia and worked in the family's hotel business. His father Edgar Sims founded MHI Hotels in 1957 by purchasing a 12-unit motel in College Park. The company later became MHI Hospitality Corporation and is now Sotherly Hotels. Shaye Sims was from Bowling Green, Kentucky and attended Hollins College in Roanoke, VA. Kim and Shaye Sims owned the property for only three years, 1984-1987, early in their marriage.

Rodney and Leslie Coleman 1987-1995

The Colemans added the rear addition in the early 1990s. The addition added a family room on the first floor. The second story of the addition includes a master bedroom and bathroom. The cantilevered turret was designed to provide access to a second-floor deck which was never built. The previous and current owners have used that interior space as a dressing room between the master bed and bath and blocked the exterior door from the inside with an armoire.

Kenneth Bannister 1995-2024

Kenneth Bannister was the most recent and longest owner of the property, from 1995 to 2024. He was an engineer and longtime employee of Applied Research Associates. He sold the property in 2024 after 29 years of ownership.

While the ownership of the Maerlender-Hughes House is not defined by a single person or family, the progression of residents is reflective of a geographically mobile middle-class suburban community. The occupants were associated with the nearby Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, the University of Maryland, and the College Park motel industry representing a variety of twentieth century heritage themes related to suburban growth, streetcar suburbs, industry and the local presence of the federal government. The Maerlender-Hughes house and property retains its Colonial Revival character, and the suburban context of Calvert Hills remains unsubstantially changed since 1948, despite the commercial growth of nearby College Park and Riverdale Park.

Significance

The Maerlender-Hughes House is significant as a substantially intact example of simplified Colonial Revival style domestic architecture in the Calvert Hills section of College Park. The property also embodies the heritage theme of streetcar suburb development in Prince George's County in the early twentieth century. The property's significance is reflected in its status as a contributing resource in the Calvert Hills National Register Historic District, which was listed in 2002.

Integrity/Degree of Alteration

The Maerlender-Hughes House retains its essential form as a mid-twentieth, Colonial Revival style dwelling with its entry portico, engaged dormers, and original windows. Though a relatively large two-story addition was added in the early 1990s it is differentiated from the old in architectural style and materials and is generally compatible with the 1940s structure and visually limited to the rear of the house. The Maerlender-Hughes House exhibits a high degree of integrity of workmanship, materials, and design. The property displays a high degree of integrity of location, feeling, setting, and association.

Historic Preservation Commission Policy #1-87, "Evaluating Integrity, Degree of Alteration, and Scarcity and Frequency," states that a property's integrity should be considered in the context of the scarcity of the resource type it represents, with a less restrictive standard of integrity applied when few or no other similar properties exist in the Inventory of Historic Resources. Domestic architecture in the Calvert Hills National Register District is not well represented in the County's Inventory of Historic Resources. Of the 505 contributing resources in the district approximately 57 have been individually documented and only one designated a County Historic Site: the Teed House (Historic Site 66-037-50), designated in 2020.

Despite some alterations to the exterior materials and appearance, which primarily impact non-primary elevations, the Maerlender-Hughes House retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a mid-twentieth century Colonial Revival home.

Public Hearing Testimony

At the Historic Preservation Commission's April 15, 2025, public hearing, Historic Preservation Section staff provided a slide presentation on the Maerlender-Hughes House and presented its recommendation on the proposed designation of the subject property as a Historic Site. No public testimony was received.

Conclusions

1. Staff concluded that the Maerlender-Hughes House meets three of the nine designation criteria of Subtitle 29-104(a).

Historic and Cultural Significance

- 1. A. (i) has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the County, State or Nation
- 1. A. (ii) is the site of a significant historic event
- 1. A. (iii) is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society
- 1. A. (iv) **X** exemplifies the cultural, economic, industrial, social, political or historical heritage of the County and its urban and rural communities

Architectural and Design Significance

- 2. A. (i) **X** embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction
 - 2. A. (ii) represents the work of a master craftsman, architect or builder
 - 2. A. (iii) possesses high artistic values
 - 2. A. (iv) represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
 - 2. A. (v) **X** represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or County due to its singular physical characteristics or landscape
2. Staff further concluded that, in weighing both the alterations that have been made to the house and the current representation of the resource type within the Inventory of Historic Resources, the Maerlender-Hughes House can be found to possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent, or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board and District Council that the Maerlender-Hughes House, Documented Property 66-037-51, and its 0.148-acre Environmental Setting (The east 30 feet of Lot 76 and the west 50 feet of Lots 77 and 78 in Block E, Section A, College Park), be designated a Prince George's County Historic Site as meeting the following criteria in Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iv); (2)(A)(i); and (2)(A)(v).

Historic Preservation Commission Recommendation

Commissioner **Reff** moved that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board and the District Council that the **Maerlender-Hughes House, Documented Property 66-037-51, and its 0.148-acre Environmental Setting (The east 30 feet of Lot 76 and the west 50 feet of Lots 77 and 78 in Block E, Section A, College Park), be designated a Prince George's County Historic Site as meeting the following criteria in Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iv); (2)(A)(i); and (2)(A)(v).** The motion was seconded by Commissioner **Porter**. The motion was approved 6-0.



John Peter Thompson, Chairman

Evaluation for Historic Site Designation: Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Recommendation
Maerlender-Hughes House (Documented Property 66-037-51)

April 16, 2025

Page 7

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Inventory File 66-037-51

Maha Tariq, Community Planner, Planning Area 66

Owner:

4615 Clemson Road

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College Park MD 20740

Prince George's County Council:

The Honorable Eric Olson, District 3

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Largo MD 20774

The Honorable Calvin Hawkins II, At-Large

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