

August 18, 2025

Amanda Sigillito
Chief, Nontidal Wetlands Division
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Maryland Department of the Environment
1600 Washington Boulevard
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Sent by email at amanda.sigillito@maryland.gov

Re: Acers Infra LLC Cricket Stadium- Joint Permit Application
MDE Tracking No. 202560696, Frederick County, Maryland
MHT Act / Historic Preservation Review

Greetings Ms. Sigillito,

In continuing consultation for the above referenced undertaking, the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) recently received a submission from project consultant Goodwin & Associates, Inc. This submission included items requested in our June 17, 2025 letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and copied to Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE): the project Mass Grading Plans; photographs of the project area and effected structures; and the draft Phase I Archaeology Survey Report. We now understand that the project will require a permit from MDE for fill and grading in the 100-year floodplain, and the COE has no involvement in this undertaking. MHT staff have reviewed the submitted materials and our project file. Please see below our comments regarding the undertaking's effects on historic properties pursuant to the Maryland Historical Trust Act of 1985 at §§ 5A-325 and 5A-326 of the State Finance and Procurement Article. It is MHT's opinion that the project will have an adverse effect on historic properties.

Project Description: It is MHT's understanding that the undertaking involves the proposed construction of a Cricket Stadium Complex on the property at 8400A East Patrick Street, Frederick, by Acers Infra LLC. The facility with cricket field(s), stadium, parking, new entrance drive, and associated infrastructure will require fill and grading of 13.03 acres of the 100-year floodplain of the Monocacy River. The cricket facility is phase 1 of a proposed multi-phased project that includes a new hotel in the southeast corner of the property and a residential development in the western portion of the property. The property currently houses a golf driving range, and all extant buildings, structures, and landscape features will be removed to allow for the raising and levelling of the property needed to construct the proposed cricket facility.

Archaeological Resources: Following our initial review of the proposed undertaking, MHT recommended that a Phase I archaeological investigation take place in all planned disturbance areas prior to construction given the presence of the Monocacy Battlefield (a National Historic Landmark historic district), the proximity of several prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, and the project area's potential for containing archaeological deposits that have not yet been identified (see MHT letter dated June 17, 2025). On July 29, 2025, Goodwin & Associates provided MHT with a copy of the report detailing the results of a Phase I archaeological survey that was conducted within the cricket stadium project area in June of 2025. The document - *Phase I Archaeological Survey for the Washington Freedom Cricket Grounds Project, Frederick County, Maryland* (Maymon et al. 2025) - is consistent with the reporting requirements of the *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations in Maryland* and presents the necessary documentation on the goals, methods, results, and recommendations of the Phase I investigation that was conducted within the project area.

The Phase I survey consisted of both pedestrian reconnaissance and systematic shovel testing at 20-m intervals across the current project area. A total of 282 shovel tests were excavated during the investigation, resulting in the identification of one new archaeological site - 18FR1210. The cultural material recovered from the site (only 16 historic artifacts primarily dating to the 19th century) was dispersed across a 348-x-177m area with no distinct concentrations. As noted in the Phase I report, the site appears to represent agricultural field scatter with no clear activity areas.

Based on the documentation presented in the Phase I report, we concur that the project area possesses no archaeological research potential. It is our opinion that site 18FR1210 is ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and that further archaeological investigations are not warranted for this particular undertaking.

Historic Structures and Landscapes: As noted above, the proposed undertaking is located within the Monocacy Battlefield (MIHP F-3-42), a National Historic Landmark (NHL) historic district. The NHL documentation for Monocacy Battlefield was updated in December 2024 to increase its boundary to encompass all properties on which the Battle of Monocacy occurred in July 1864 and to update its significance statement, integrity assessment, and list of contributing and non-contributing resources. Though not yet available in MHT's NR and MIHP files and Medusa, the updated NHL documentation is on the National Park Service PEPC website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=121839>.

Multiple buildings, structures, and landscapes that contribute to Monocacy Battlefield are located on and within close proximity to the undertaking. Within the project limits are the Philip Reich Farm Bank Barn and Stone Outbuilding (MIHP F-3-252) and the Philip Reich Farm open floodplain landscape between Old Baltimore Pike and I-70. Also on the property is the Old Baltimore Pike / Jug Bridge Remnants (MIHP F-3-42-1) located north of, and roughly parallel to, East Patrick Street. Surrounding the project limits are the three other resources that contribute to the NHL district: the Philip Reich House Site (Benvenue, MIHP F-3-252) at 8518 E. Patrick Street; the Jug Bridge Toll House (MIHP F-3-128) at 8614 E. Patrick Street; and the E. W. Bremmerman Store at 8721 Doctor Baxter Road.

Also in the immediate vicinity of the undertaking is the Todd-Mercer Hargett House (MIHP F-3-53), a circa 1890 Queen Anne house located on the property of Chesaco RV World at 1501 E. Patrick Street. Though non-contributing to the Monocacy Battlefield, the Todd-Mercer-Hargett House is subject to an MHT historic preservation easement and is considered eligible for listing on the National Register by MHT.

Assessment of Effect: Changes in the landscape along East Patrick Street and the Monocacy River at this location may affect historic buildings, structures, and landscapes through direct impact or through removal or introduction of visual elements that stand out and substantially interrupt the viewshed of surrounding historic properties. Based on its mapped limits, project description, and grading plan, it is MHT's opinion that this undertaking will cause an **adverse effect** on the Monocacy Battlefield (F-3-42) through physical removal of the contributing Bank Barn, Stone Outbuilding, and landscape at the Philip Reich Farm, and through alterations to the setting of the district caused by the introduction a large modern athletic facility in this part of its landscape. It is unclear if the project will directly impact the Old Baltimore Pike / Jug Bridge Remnants (stone abutment) on the west side of Monocacy Creek. Efforts should be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to the Philip Reich Farm resources and landscape, and to the viewshed of the Jug Bridge Toll House, Old Baltimore Pike / Jug Bridge Remnants, and the Todd-Mercer-Hargett House.

Next Steps: Historic preservation regulations specify the process for resolving the adverse effects of an undertaking on historic properties. Further consultation is needed among MDE, MHT, the applicant, and other consulting parties to develop and evaluate alternatives that may avoid, minimize, or mitigate the adverse effect of the undertaking. If avoidance of the adverse effect is not feasible, MDE will need to develop and execute a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between MDE, MHT, other interested parties, and the public to establish reasonable and meaningful measures to reduce and mitigate the adverse effect of the undertaking.

The consulting parties and the public have a valuable role in the consultation process, as well as in the development of mitigation measures. MDE should reach out to potential consulting parties and the public to inform them of the project, invite them to participate in the historic preservation review process, and to seek their views regarding measures to avoid and reduce adverse effects. Consulting parties should include the following entities at a minimum: the City of Frederick Historic Preservation Office and Historic Preservation Commission, Monocacy National Battlefield, the National Park Service Capital Region National Historic Landmark Office, the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation, the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, Preservation Maryland, the Frederick County Landmarks Foundation, and the public.

The undertaking is located within the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, a Certified Heritage Area, and has the potential to adversely affect the historic and cultural resources of the heritage area. Under the Maryland Heritage Area Law, Section 13-1112(b) of the Financial Institutions Article, state units must consult with certified heritage areas regarding actions that may affect the heritage area, as follows:

(b) Units of State government that conduct or support activities affecting a certified heritage area shall:

- 1) Consult, cooperate, and to the maximum extent feasible, coordinate their activities with the unit or entity responsible for the management of each certified heritage area; and
- 2) To the maximum extent practicable, carry out the activities of the unit in a manner that is consistent with the approved management plan for the certified heritage area; and
- 3) When conducting a review of activities under §§ 5A-325 and 5A-326 of the State Finance and Procurement Article, assure that the activities will not have an adverse effect on the historic and cultural resources of the certified heritage area, unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative.

We recommend that MDE open consultation with the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area and seek its views regarding the project's impacts to resources within the heritage area. For further assistance regarding the Maryland Heritage Areas Program, please contact Ariane Hofstedt, Administrator, at ariane.hofstedt@maryland.gov.

MHT looks forward to working with MDE, the applicant, and other involved parties to successfully complete the historic preservation review of this undertaking. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact either Dixie Henry (regarding archaeological resources) at dixie.henry@maryland.gov or Becky Roman (regarding historic structures and landscapes) at becky.roman@maryland.gov. Thank you for providing us the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Hughes, Director / State Historic Preservation Officer
Maryland Historical Trust

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