

CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
110 EAST STATE STREET**

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

August 1, 2007

2:00 P.M.

MINUTES

CCHPC Members Present:

**Daves Rossell, Chairman
George Cohen, Vice-Chairman
Jane A. Feiler
Vaughnette Goode-Walker
William Haynes
Stephen T. Lindell
Pamela G. Lossing
Christian Sottile
Lisa L. White**

CCHPC/MPC Staff Members Present:

**Ellen Harris, Historic Preservation Planner
Janine N. Person, Administrative Assistant**

I. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Rossell gave a brief introduction and asked Board members and Staff to introduce themselves. He welcomed Ms. Jane Feiler, the newest Board member.

III. Historic Property Designation

File No.: DP 20070530-02-1

Maridon

2326 East Boulevard

Present for the petition was Mrs. Joyce Fischer.

Ms. Harris gave the Staff report.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission recommend approval of the designation of Maridon as a Historic Property on the Chatham County Register of Historic Places to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners, because it meets the criteria established in Section IV.D.1. of the Chatham County Historic Preservation Ordinance.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Maridon is located at 2326 East Boulevard on Wilmington Island in Chatham County. The property is situated on a triangular shaped lot on a private road on the south end of the island. The property is bordered by saltwater marshes leading out to

Sheephead Creek on two sides. The main house is a one-story raised wood frame building with cedar post foundations, clapboard siding, an L-shaped covered porch on the south and west facades, and a 5-v crimp metal roof with exposed rafter tails. The building probably originally consisted of three rooms, with a rear porch and the L-shaped porch on the south and west facades. It has been added on considerably, and most of the additions have acquired historic significance. There is a pump house and a water tank to the west of the main house, both of which appear to be in fair condition. There are also two docks on the property, to the south and the southeast.

Statement of Significance:

Maridon was constructed in March 1891 as the Eureka Club for the Wilmington Island Pleasure and Improvement Company. The property changed hands several times through the next two decades among the Eureka Club members. By 1908 Champion was the sole owner of the Club. Deeds throughout the period refer to the property as the "Eureka Club Lot." By 1921 the property was owned by William Farr, a lawyer and land developer very prominent in the development of the Parkside neighborhood in Savannah. Through his ownership, the property came to be known as "Farr's Point". The property was said to have been involved with the oyster industry. The owner has stated that she has met African-American women who personally recall shucking oysters for "Judge Farr." Additionally, posts associated with the pulley system used to transport oysters from the oyster dock to the main house are still extant. In 1937, the property was sold to Marion Heeth and subsequently rented out for several years. In 1945, it was sold to the Rogers. Newspaper articles from 1945 announcing the property's availability for purchase are the first records, which use the name "Maridon" and "Maradon". Photographic evidence and personal accounts indicate that sometime between 1891 and 1945, significant additions were made to the property. Newspaper articles subsequent to the sale of the property note that Maridon "is one of the largest and best known places on the Wilmington." The article goes on to describe the new owner, Mr. Rogers, as "one of the most ardent and skilled salt water fishermen in this vicinity, is understood to have plans for experiments that will develop this avocation...". The property has remained in the Rogers family since 1945. The pump house and water tank both existed by 1941, according to personal accounts and photographic evidence. Personal accounts and photographs indicate there were two structures at the end of the two docks: an oyster house and a boathouse. Neither structure is extant.

The property may be significant in the area of historic archaeology. The property owner has seen maps indicating Civil War batteries on the property and has found artifacts to substantiate the claim. A review of maps in The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War was inconclusive.

The property is very significant in the area of architecture as a significant, intact, uniquely coastal structure. A one-story, raised Queen Anne cottage in form, it is vernacular in style and materials. A particularly significant feature of the cottage is the cypress post foundations, a local material, many of which appear to be original. As older posts wore out, they were replaced in kind, maintaining the character and integrity of the property.

In the area of commerce, Maridon represents the transition of Wilmington Island from a purely agricultural economy to a recreational one. The property served as the clubhouse for the Wilmington Island Pleasure and Improvement Company, which was founded in the late 1880s by a group of local investors who bought, sold and developed land. The company operated regularly scheduled boat transportation from Thunderbolt to Wilmington Island. Early plans for the development of the Island included a series of streets, public wharf, pavilion, and park. Residential developments grew up during the 1890s, primarily serving as summer homes along

the river. Later these homes were winterized and lived in year long. During the 1920's a golf course and hotel were constructed.

The property is also significant in the area of exploration/settlement. Wilmington Island was relatively isolated until the late 19th century. Through the efforts of the Wilmington Island Pleasure and Improvement Company and others, the Island developed into a popular residential and recreational destination.

Ms. Harris stated that the report for the nomination includes background history, photographs, etc., followed by the Historic Property Designation Ordinance, which includes the Design Guidelines and Standards, as recommended by the County Attorney. The final page is the resolution. The Commission's action would be to adopt the resolution, which recommends to the County Commissioners that they adopt the Designation Ordinance.

PETITIONER'S COMMENTS:

Mrs. Joyce Fischer thanked Staff, Commission members, and SCAD students for all of their work involved with this project. She stated she enjoyed the students and wishes for her property to be on the historical register. She said three and four million dollar homes were replacing smaller historic cottages, and if she could, she would take them and place them on her lots to preserve them.

Dr. Rossell stated that Mrs. Fischer is a great source for information into historic Wilmington Island, and said there is a significant historic character on the edges of Wilmington Island that deserves to be recognized. He encouraged her to contact others and be supportive of future nominations.

Mrs. Fischer stated she thought they might be afraid because of lack of knowledge regarding what the nomination is about. Once one house is listed, then it will probably be easier for others to do.

Ms. Goode-Walker asked if the water tower is still operative.

Mrs. Fischer stated that it is their source of water and that she has it tested every year. She said it was also a range marker similar to the tower on the very south end of Tybee that was a range marker for Fort Stewart during the war. The same company that built her water tank built the tower, and it was identical except that it was not a tank.

Ms. Feiler noted that it is currently used as a private residence and asked what would happen in the future if it were no longer a private residence.

Ms. Harris said that the designation would stay with the property. She said it is not required to remain a residence and if it were to become something else, the guidelines would still be applicable. The designation goes with the property regardless of the ownership or the use.

CCHPC ACTION: Mr. Lindell made a motion that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission adopt the resolution to recommend approval of Maridon as a Historic Property to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners as submitted. Ms. Lossing seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

IV. UPDATES

A. Contact with Communities/Individuals Interested in District or Property Nominations

Ms. Harris stated she met with individuals from Beaulieu on July 25 at the Turner-Hodge-Young Community Center and that it was a successful meeting. She said that Beaulieu needed to get the word out more but that the participants in attendance were interested. She met with individuals from Isle of Hope and said that Mr. Lee Meyer is heading the nominating committee. They have collected the required number of signatures to proceed with the nomination and are moving forward. There is still some research and background work that needs to be done, but it will eventually come before the Commission.

Ms. White asked about the Isle of Hope boundaries.

Ms. Harris stated that the boundaries follow the existing National Register, but slightly expanded. There are approximately 170 parcels within it and it is a large district.

Ms. White asked if Beaulieu is on the National Register.

Ms. Harris stated that they currently are not. They had applied and were turned down, and are interested in reevaluating their National Register application. She said they feel there are some areas where they could provide additional information and will proceed from there.

V. CODE OF ETHICS - Discussion

Ms. Harris stated that the Code of Ethics information was handed out at the Board retreat for review and discussion. She recommended the adoption of the Code of Ethics by amending the By-Laws to incorporate the code within it. She noted that this is a recommendation to all the Historic Preservation Department's Boards.

VI. REVISIONS TO BY-LAWS AND PROCEDURAL MANUAL

Ms. Harris stated that before revising the By-Laws or the Procedural Manual, the rules state it must be brought before the Commission in writing, in a public meeting, then it would be voted on at the next meeting. She said it is for discussion only.

Dr. Rossell stated he thinks incorporating the Code of Ethics is an excellent idea.

Ms. Harris stated they would vote at the next meeting and she recommended correcting some inconsistencies as they are amending the By-Laws anyway. The Commission was referred to in the By-Laws and Procedural Manual as the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and she proposed it be changed to the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) to be more specific and consistent. Page 7 incorporates the National Alliance for Preservation Commissions Conflict of Interest statement by stating, "...the CCHPC will further abide by the National Alliance for Preservation Commissions Code of Ethics for Commissioners and Staff and the provisions of which are hereby incorporated by reference". She said that also on Page 7 under the Committees section, the word "at" should be corrected to "as". In the Procedural Manual "an Historic District" is changed to "a Historic District". She said that on Page 7 a misspelling of "area" was corrected, and on Page 22 "insure" was changed to "ensure".

Dr. **Rossell** asked if there were any further revisions and stated there would be an opportunity at the September meeting to propose additional revisions.

VII. MEETING MINUTES

B. June 6, 2007

CCHPC ACTION: Mr. Cohen made a motion that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Goode-Walker seconded the motion and it passed 8 to 0. Ms. Feiler abstained.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris,
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp