

Phase II and Phase III Project Cover Sheet

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REPORT INFORMATION:

1976 Israel, S.
Preliminary Test Excavations at the Belair Estate, East Wing Area of the Mansion House Site, Prince George's County, Maryland.
Submitted to the City of Bowie Bicentennial Committee

Library ID No: 00006554 Catalog/Shelving ID: PR 7A

Research Firm/Institution:

Stephen Israel
PO Box 1715
Baltimore, MD 21203

Sites examined:

18PR135

NRHP Eligible:

[Justification](#)

NRHP Listed:

Project Details:

Phase I

Phase II

Phase III

Project Justification:

Excavations in 1976 were undertaken at Belair Mansion at the behest of the City of Bowie Bicentennial Committee. This committee was one of many such local committees scattered throughout the nation tasked with preparing for the celebration of the American Bicentennial. At the time, there was widespread interest in funding the excavation of 18th century archeological sites of local significance. Belair Mansion, once the home of two colonial governors and an early governor of the State of Maryland was the site of archeological work sponsored by the Bowie town committee.

Project Objectives:

-Locate and examine the foundations of several plantation outbuildings mentioned in archival records from 1769 and 1798.

Research Potential:

See below for remaining research questions at 18PR135.

REPORT INFORMATION:

1990 Gibb, J.G.
Data Recovery in the East Areaway of Belair Mansion (18PR135), Bowie, Maryland.
Submitted to the City of Bowie

Library ID No: 00006677 Catalog/Shelving ID: PR 114

Research Firm/Institution:

James G. Gibb, Archaeological Consultant
PO Box 378
North Beach, MD 20714

Sites examined:

18PR135

NRHP Eligible:

[Justification](#)

NRHP Listed:

Project Details:

Phase I

Phase II

Phase III

Project Justification:

At the time of this project, the City of Bowie was in the process of restoring the Belair Mansion with the intention of reopening it for public use. Restoration plans involved reopening the long-closed basement door and the east half of the bulkhead entranceway that runs the length of the north façade of the original mansion block. In conformance with the terms of their historical easement for this National Register site, overseen by the Maryland Historical Trust, the City of Bowie sponsored archeological monitoring and data recovery at the site.

Project Objectives:

-Monitor the re-excavation of the east half of the entranceway.

-Record any previously undocumented data.

-Conduct such minor excavations as might be necessary to clarify stratigraphic relationships.

-Report and interpret the data and make recommendations for the preservation of features and surviving archeological deposits.

Research Potential:

See below for remaining research questions at 18PR135.

REPORT INFORMATION:

1994 Gibb, J.G.
 A Phase I Archaeological Survey and Limited Phase II Archaeological Site Examination at Belair Mansion (18PR135), Bowie, Prince George's County, Maryland.
 Submitted to the City of Bowie

Research Firm/Institution:

James G. Gibb, Archaeological Consultant
 2554 Carrollton Road
 Annapolis, MD 21403

Library ID No: 00006738 Catalog/Shelving ID: PR 170

Sites examined:

18PR135

NRHP Eligible: [Justification](#)NRHP Listed:

Project Details:

Phase I Phase II

Phase III

Project Justification:

At the time of this project, the City of Bowie, in cooperation with the Maryland Historical Trust, and the assistance of the Friends of the Belair Mansion, was proposing additional rehabilitation of Belair Mansion and the construction of new parking facilities. The Maryland Historical Trust, which holds an historical easement on the property, requested that an archeological study be undertaken at the two proposed parking lot locations prior to their construction. The City of Bowie also requested limited testing of terraced lawns on the south side of the mansion.

Project Objectives:

-Define the horizontal and vertical limits of cultural resources within the area of proposed effects.

-Determine the activities, functions, time span, and pertinent historic contexts of the identified deposits.

-Identify those research questions for which the identified resources are most appropriate.

-Evaluate the National Register eligibility of the identified resources.

-Determine the impact of proposed construction on the identified resources.

-Assess the need for additional archeological research.

Research Potential:

See below for remaining research questions at 18PR135.

REPORT INFORMATION:

2001 Gibb, J.G.
 Phase III Archaeological Data Recovery at Belair Mansion (18PR135), Bowie, Prince George's County, Maryland.
 Submitted to the City Museums of Bowie

Research Firm/Institution:

James G. Gibb, Archaeological Consultant
 2554 Carrollton Road
 Annapolis, MD 21403

Library ID No: 97001159 Catalog/Shelving ID: PR 274

Sites examined:

18PR135

NRHP Eligible: [Justification](#)NRHP Listed:

Project Details:

Phase I

Phase II

Phase III **Project Justification:**

In 1994 and 1995, the City of Bowie, in cooperation with the Friends of Belair Mansion and the Maryland Historical Trust, built a parking lot and renovated a driveway for public use of the Belair Mansion. This mid-18th century mansion and grounds was to eventually serve as a museum and public reception center. Archeological monitoring of pavement removal in 1994 (for these renovations) led to the discovery of intact features in an area the previously had received only cursory examination. Demolition and grading were suspended until plans could be made for full-scale Phase III data recovery operations. This report presents the findings of those data recovery operations.

Project Objectives:

-Obtain spatial data on the distributions of structural remains and architectural artifacts, as well as chronological data principally provided by nails and ceramics.

-Compare the spatial layout of the property to other common 18th century plantation landscapes.

-Examine stratigraphic integrity through soils and artifact analyses.

-Analyze the ceramic and glass vessel assemblages in light of the economic and social standing of the site's inhabitants.

-Determine what consumptive behaviors are possibly represented by the ceramic and glass assemblages.

-Determine if the two primary occupant groups at the site (very wealthy Anglo-Americans vs. indentured and slave labor of largely African and British heritage) are represented by spatially discrete sub-assemblages of bone or different processing and consumption

Research Potential:

The collective work conducted at 18PR135 from 1976 onward reveals that the archeological deposits at Belair Mansion have been severely compromised by demolition, new construction, and new landscaping. Surviving resources in the front (north) yards (east and west) may be worth further exploration (see synopsis report), while surviving deposits in the south yard are likely limited to the uppermost terrace (immediately adjacent to the building). If intact deposits survive, they may require a larger scale of archeological testing than hitherto has been accomplished.
