City Council
Staff Report

Subject: Historical Archaeology Potential of the McPolin Farmstead
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Department: Executive
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Type of Item: Informational

Summary Recommendation
Review locations at the McPolin Farm that have high archaeological potential and worthwhile opportunities for public archaeology.

Executive Summary
• During the June 4, 2018, site visit with archaeologists, staff believes the extant remains of the McPolin root cellar on the hill slope to the southwest of the main property and across the paved recreational path, were potentially identified.
• Staff is working to hire an archaeological consultant to conduct both geophysical analysis and subsurface testing of several areas and features of the site for the potential to increase the historical aspects of the property and the education it provides to the public (Attachment 1).
• Though we are only in the exploratory phase, a potential active archaeological dig would be classified as “Public Archaeology” to better include the community and further include our understand of our historical past.
• Park City is a Certified Local Government (CLG) and eligible for state grants to fund historic preservation projects, including archaeology. During the 2017-2018 grant cycle, the Utah Division of State History awarded the PC Planning Department $10,000 in matching grant funds. PCMC staff believes a similar amount may be available in the next grant cycle for the McPolin Farm. Additional funds may also be available through the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
• PCMC will continue to assess funding and considerations, and report on progress (Attachment 2).
• Identified Potential Zone 1: Root Cellar is located on the conservation easement property held by SLC; they are supportive of the proposed potential activity. Staff will continue to keep SLC informed of activity on the conservation easement property.

Acronyms
• Park City Municipal Corporation (PCMC)
• Antiquities Section of the Utah Division of State History (AS)
• Certified Local Government (CLG)
• National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)
• Summit Land Conservancy (SLC)
The Problem / Opportunity

- Historical archaeology of farmsteads has a long tradition in North America with significant information yielded on the functional use of space, gendered spaces, ethnic/religious identity, socioeconomics, and a host of other topics.
- There are two omissions in the NRHP nomination. First, it appears that a root cellar was missed in the nomination process. Second, there was no discussion in the nomination of the potential for archaeological deposits making the property eligible under Criteria D, for potential to provide data important for our understanding of history. It is the opinion of the AS, that targeted geophysical fieldwork coupled with subsurface testing will adequately provide information to revise the NRHP nomination to include considerations for Criteria D.
- Social archeology at the McPolin Farm may also provide further insights history of the Park City area, as well as a unique opportunity for public engagement with the site. Further, any work of volunteers from the local community, public tours of the ongoing excavations, and additional public products such as small presentations and exhibits aligns with the recommendation for further interpretation of the Farm in the McPolin Farm Preservation Plan.

Background

- PCMC purchased the farmstead in 1990 for public enjoyment.
- The Farmstead, comprised of six contributing buildings, was listed on the NRHP in 2003 (NRIS#03000155) under Criterion A and C. A more thorough history of the farmstead and its features are included in Morrison’s (2002) original NRHP nomination form (Attachment 3).
- Post-1953 private owners and PCMC moved several of the contributing buildings around the site, making their original locations slightly more difficult to identify.
- AS employed historic aerial imagery, pedestrian survey, historic photographs, and extant archival and secondary documentary resources to identify areas of high potential archaeological deposits.

Department Review

Executive, Building, Historic Preservation and Legal Departments

Attachments

- Attachment 1 - Identified Archaeological Potential Zones
- Attachment 2 - Considerations
- Attachment 3 - NRHP nomination form
- McPolin Farm Preservation Plan

References


A seminal paper by King and Miller (1987) on analyzing historic farmsteads is related to the Colonial-era Van Sweringen Farm, where spatial analysis of yard refuse helped to interpret the changes of consumer choice, refuse disposal and
concepts of cleanliness, and even the ethnic and national identity changes of the occupants. A similar research program could come into play at the McPolin Farmstead, even outside the high probability zones mentioned above.


A second, more recent, article talks about farmstead landscapes in Michigan.